
A Czechoslovak Reflection on the Message of the Icon

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IN THE RENEWED ORTHODOX CHURCH IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA, THE memory of the 1200th anniversary of the Seventh Ecumenical Synod means, for us, a significant and joyful occasion to share with you the results of our missionary work.

The Orthodox Church in Czechoslovakia is the youngest sister of the contemporary Orthodox churches. If we look back in history, however, the truth will soon be revealed that the Orthodox Church in Czechoslovakia is, in fact, the oldest sister among Slavonic Orthodox churches, the cradle of Slavonic Christianity, Slavonic literature, and culture. One hundred years after the Seventh Ecumenical Synod, in the ninth century, Saints Cyril and Methodios came from Byzantium to our territory, Great Moravia, as the first missionaries to disseminate the Orthodox faith among the Slavs. After twenty years, the Cyrillo-Methodian mission was suppressed. However, the very awareness of the fact that our nation was privileged to disseminate Christianity in its own language, and to use its own script for the Gospel and liturgical books, suggests that the consciousness of its culture turned into support for religious truth, national pride, and the right to national and ecclesiastical independence in difficult times. Thus, this tradition contributed for centuries to the spiritualization of our nation.

It should be noted, however, that the renewal of the Orthodox Church in Czechoslovakia took place as late as the twentieth century. Its restoration and the efforts of the first Czech hierarch, Bishop Gorazd, to build up the Orthodox Church contain in themselves a historical continuity with the mission of Cyril and Methodios who were sent from Constantinople to Great Moravia in the ninth century. After the expulsion of the disciples of Cyril and Methodios from

Moravia, this tradition of Orthodox missionary activity continued in the countries of the southern Slavs, Serbia, and Bulgaria. Further on, the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition developed strongly in Kievan Russia. After centuries, it returned in 1921 to Moravia and Bohemia from the Serbian Orthodox Church with Gorazd's episcopal ordination. Thus, the Serbian Orthodox Church paid back its ancient debt to the sons of Moravia for dissemination of the faith by the Moravian disciples of Cyril and Methodios. In the year 1922, Bishop Gorazd looked for assistance in his missionary work, even in America where he was active for half a year. After the harsh trials of the Czech Orthodox Church during the Second World War, Bishop Gorazd was executed on September 4, 1942, by German fascists. The twenty-one years of the Orthodox Church's apostolic activity in Bohemia and Moravia were violently ended with the martyrdom of Gorazd and his brother bishops. After the war, our newly resurrected Orthodox obtained autocephaly once again from the Russian Orthodox Church.

Today, our Church is living a great historic moment—Bishop Gorazd, the first Orthodox bishop of Bohemia and Moravia, will be canonized on the occasion of the forty-fifth anniversary of his martyrdom.

For all believers and our church, the new martyr Saint Gorazd will become the symbol of suffering, an example of a fighter for the Orthodox Church, of renewal of Orthodoxy in Czechoslovakia, of resistance to ideas of inhumanity and humiliation, and of a missionary for new times. Bishop Gorazd and his brother bishops laid a good foundation for the growth of the Church and for the divine services, in the Czech language. Together with the construction of new churches, iconography continues to increase. The renewed Orthodox Church in Czechoslovakia has, thus far, not yet created any important iconographic works. Usually, it followed the tradition of other Slavonic Orthodox nations, the tradition of popular iconography in Slovakia developing in the vicinity of Orthodox Russia. Moreover, and finally, it can follow upon the famous works of old Czech masters from the Gothic period of the fourteenth to fifteenth centuries. Their paintings, originating during the period of the Roman Catholic Church's rule in our country, bear all the characteristic features of eastern, Byzantine iconography, iconography resulting from the suppressed Cyrillo-Methodian Orthodox tradition of Great Moravia.

In small Czechoslovakia, in the center of Europe, the believing people at the present time worship in eighteen churches and religious communities; for that reason, the Orthodox Church in our country has an important and difficult message for the future: defend in a comprehensible way the Orthodoxy of Christian teaching and exhibit

examples of such Orthodoxy. One such witness is the life and death of Bishop Gorazd.

Part and parcel of the main mission of our church is also revelation of the mystery of the icon, iconography, and the way to invite Christians of other confessions into the invisible world of the kingdom of God. In the past the words of Saint John of Damascus held true: "If a pagan asks you in what consists your faith, just bring him to the church and show him the icons. . . ." In fact, icons are inseparably connected with the house of God and the rite of the Divine Liturgy; they explain and clarify the dogmas of Orthodoxy. Moreover, they do not serve as merely a means of decoration and aesthetic improvement of the building, as Christians of other confessions very often believe. When we enter church, we enter the divine world. God is invisibly present. He is surrounded by a multitude of angels, saints, and prophets. Present also is the Mother of God with the baby Jesus. We meet them all during the Divine Liturgy. Our human visible world forms one entity with the invisible, a transcendent world as the single kingdom of God.

Today, as well as in the future, at a time when technology offers new possibilities for cognition, especially of vision—television, video, etc., revelation of the deep sense and mystery of the icon has great and promising possibilities for faith dissemination. On the occasion of the anniversary of the Seventh Ecumenical Synod we have the possibility to renew and emphasize the strength and impressiveness of the icon. There are, after all, many persons in the twentieth century who by their spiritual impoverishment and lack of understanding do not differ very much from the pagans of preceding centuries. In the evaluation of icons we come across very different and often controversial views. The reasons for such diversity may be varied. For a better comprehension of the icon it is necessary to understand, in all its breadth, the significance of its hidden *substance*. This substance consists of Christian teaching, the Orthodox faith, the sources and inspired intentions of the icons' creators, and the culture of the East. The icon can be observed and understood from numerous perspectives: theological, historical, social, and artistic. Apart from the objective attitudes we may admit during such evaluation, we must at the same time confess even a subjective relation to the icon. Equally, it is not easy for everybody in the present time to grasp the icon and its world in all its complexity. However, there were times when believers were "reading" the icon just as the Gospel, when the icon could communicate as much truth as the Holy Scripture and when, through the words of prayer, it was near to them. The great interest in icons in this country and the West is not only a symptom of ad-

miration for its artistic value, but also, a reflection of the aspirations of the twentieth century man to achieve spiritual cognition through spiritual art.

Since the decision of the Seventh Ecumenical Synod concerning the veneration of icons was made at a time when the Church was one and undivided, its validity stands for all Christians today, just as in the past. It should be explained to the people of God that the icon means representation, that it is the very substance representing the living personhood of Christ, the Mother of God, the Apostles, the martyrs, etc. It is the result of the need for concrete, specific religious feeling. On the basis of a concrete impulse, a spiritual and artistic experience, it orientates the mind to mystic spiritualism. The believer is not only satisfied with spiritual perception, meditation, and contemplation. He looks with open eyes for an immediate, visible, and touchable nearness of the invisible spiritual: the Absolute. After all, even today, God is not somewhere in the distance, deeply hidden; He is part of our life and world. The icon is, and will be even in the future, a means enabling us to look from the visible world into the mystery of the invisible world forming a unity between the two. Speaking metaphorically, it is the window between the visible and invisible worlds opened through our prayer. Christ reveals himself to us once again through the icon. The depicted persons in their prototype, whom they represent, are presented to the believer in icons as those who continue their lives on earth. They enter, thanks to our efforts through prayer and our address to God, into our daily life, and establish again and again a connection between man and the Divine. Thus, it is necessary for man to be ready to perceive the secret of the icon so that he can approach it with respect, love, and inner chastity.

In the present and future worlds, the icon can become a place where information is transferred through picture symbolism. If you look at an icon, ask yourself what the icon seeks to communicate to you. It is also a "phenomenon from the Heavens," not only made by hands. Its origin is the basis of spiritual vision and, for that reason, is a revelation. As with every revelation, it is the source of theology, iconographic theology, and a special kind of ecclesiastical message, a message in picture and colors. It is not in vain that the iconostasis and icons in our Church are commonly called Holy Scripture in pictures. Moreover, the Gospel can be characterized as a verbal icon of Christ.

Evaluation of the artistic level of icons has always been and will be problematic. Criteria for this evaluation must differ from those of the evaluation of secular works of art and western painting with

religious themes. Such evaluation is a matter of spiritual vision and not of secular perception: a quest for the expression of spiritual vision and a search for its artistic forms. Tension is hidden in the relationship between the spiritual form and its content. It is a tension of the imperfection of human efforts: human means confronted by the absolute perfection of the depicted object, the kingdom of God. It is not easy to explain to those who are interested in iconography, or even to some believers, that iconography is more than mere art. It is, in fact, God-vision and God-knowledge witnessing in artistic form. Iconography is, therefore, a quite special kind of symbolic art, both in its content and form. The painter of icons unites in his person both artist and theologian. Naturalism and realism are strange to him. He does not allow the depiction of sensuality. Colors, lines, composition, and "animated faces" tend to asceticism, to the spiritual world of love, truth, suffering, sacrifice, beauty, humbleness, etc. They should not attract attention to themselves; they are, in turn, in the service of great values. The iconographic canon, centered especially on the significance of communicated content, does not restrict freedom of artistic form, or the way of artistic expression. If, in certain characteristic features, iconography is the same, it only means that the Truth conveyed by it is the same and unchangeable. Present and future time could bring forth works in iconography depicting the kingdom of God on earth, its cosmic dimensions, and a rapid development of technology; all of this side by side with the invisible, transcendental image of the kingdom of God.

In the past, because man and the world seemed so small, space was full of mystery. Consequently, the kingdom of God was depicted as more heavenly. Man of the twenty-first century, who will know far more about space, will be looking for the kingdom of God more within himself, within the human soul, in the saints, and in the Church, "for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you" (Lk 17.21).

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An Assessment of Theological Issues Today

SAVAS AGOURIDES

THE SUBJECT OF THIS INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS IS "AN ASSESSMENT of Theological Issues Today"; a broad subject that can be approached in various ways. Among several possibilities, I have decided to focus my remarks on the expression of certain critical and important theological issues facing our church today. It would not be wise to spend the limited time allotted to me saying something about everything, much less to offer proper tribute to the theological work that has been done in our church during the past generation. By saying this, it is not my intent to minimize or disregard the important contributions of theologians to the theological task of our church. Rather, the vision of this conference is turned toward the future. It is turned toward the coming third millennium of Christianity's history in the sense that we are confronted with new and serious problems which do not allow for complacent evaluations concerning present achievements. It is for this reason I consider this address useful as a critical assessment of some of our theological situations and problems in order to examine our present condition of preparedness for the obligations of the forthcoming era.

For Orthodox theologians, the theological issues primarily referred to can be classified into three groups: 1) issues related to the identity of Orthodox theology vis-à-vis contemporary Christian thinking, world-ideologies and religions; 2) issues related to the special mission of the Orthodox Church in the Ecumenical Movement of our times; and, 3) issues concerning the relationship between Church and society within our secularized technological world, around which the thematology of this conference is correctly centered.

Contemporary powerful states, our consumerist materialism, and nuclear power and the imminence of a world catastrophe, give priority

to theological issues like war and peace, technology and the quality of life, society (cosmos), and the kingdom of God.

Although a great number of subjects belong to each of the above three categories, my assessment, as stated earlier, will be limited to remarks on only some of these issues.

In the first fifty years, beginning with the First Congress of the Orthodox Theological Faculties in Athens (1936), Orthodox theology has been struggling to define its identity in the broader context and under difficult circumstances. During this foundation-shaking period, with conditions of suffering and ease, encouragement and threat, well-known centers of theological learning in Europe and America rendered noteworthy contributions in the redefinition and classification of the character of Eastern Orthodoxy within the wider Christian community vis-à-vis contemporary currents of thought. Accentuated especially in the confrontation of existentialism and socialism, science and materialistic ideologies, Orthodox theologians did their best as one would expect, to affirm the Orthodox faith as the most authoritative meaning of existence, as the substance of any true society, and as support of any search for truth aiming at the benefit of the human race. At the same time, however, they humbly accepted a large share of the responsibility for people turning away from the Church. Even though these theological accomplishments were a form of witness of Orthodoxy to the contemporary world, they failed to open any real dialogue with current theological thinking, nor with world ideologies on the level of a commonly accepted vocabulary. A real dialogue presupposes a deep spiritual awakening. It is understood, however, that the majority of Orthodox churches are accustomed to relying on state support for their very existence and perpetuation. Most, in fact, do not feel prepared to look at the world, in the context of their own resources, without visible or invisible meditation and protection of the state. Such an attitude, one which has existed for centuries, must be surmounted. The fight to overcome this barrier will be, in essence, that spiritual reawakening so necessary for a fruitful dialogue with the world. For theology, real dialogue presupposes a broad and deep understanding of the world. It is unthinkable for one to speak of the Christian faith intelligently today without being deeply aware of all the varieties of intellectual achievement which have occurred in thought, science, art, the social sciences, economics, and politics. Serious dialogue is a demanding task. It requires from the engaged theologian knowledge of what is really going on in the world today, what is happening. Neither naive apologetics nor ecclesiastical rhetoric can cover for the lack of this kind of deep knowledge of the world by the theologian.

Real dialogue also demands unreserved acceptance of scientific methodology by the people doing theology. Orthodoxy cannot really fulfill its present-day task without accepting, unhesitatingly, the results of the historic, critical study of the Bible, of the Fathers of the Church, or of church history. During the last fifty years, some of its centers of learning have taken courageous steps in the field of biblical studies. Some of its biblical scholars can be proud of what they have accomplished in this field. The historical critical method has been accepted and established by many Orthodox faculties as the proper method of approaching the sacred text. This method has been recognized on the basis of sound biblical and patristic traditions. Its aim is to discover theological meaning of the text in relation to the actual profound needs of the Church. However, in spite of all that has been said, biblical theologians have not been able to convince our colleagues and churches to make use of the best findings of modern biblical scholarship. Many Orthodox theologians, even some of our colleagues and church leaders, continue to speak of the Bible solely in terms of the patristic exegetical tradition of the middle ages, namely in a conformist, repetitive, imitative, dry formalistic exegetical way. The challenge of the late Fr. Georges Florovsky, of blessed memory, for a "neopatristic" use of the Fathers is still for most of us a voice in the wilderness. Our churches still cling to "old" medieval tradition as something sacrosanct; they refuse to look anew at the Bible, at their tradition, or at Orthodoxy's present historical reality.

With regard to patristic studies we have also witnessed, within certain Orthodox countries, considerable progress during the last fifty years. Not only has the publication of patristic texts been on the increase, but the production of writings on various patristic subjects has also reached a high point. However, in spite of all these clear, progressive steps, we have not experienced a renewal of the patristic spiritual tradition. Interference of other motivations in the study of the texts, as well as a disregard for their historical contexts, accounts for but a few reasons explaining this phenomenon. The scientific requirement of studying the past in its historical context must be seriously taken into consideration insofar as the Bible, the Fathers, and the history of the Church are concerned. Otherwise, one's own intentions and ideas transform scientific work into a confirmation of what one actually presupposes and wishes, the result being an apology of the status quo.

I will give you an example which is quite amusing. In the Athens Faculty of Theology some years ago we had to examine a series of doctoral theses on anthropological patristic subjects (for example, "Man According to Saint Basil the Great," or "Man According to

Saint Gregory of Nyssa," or "Man According to Saint Maximos the Confessor," etc.). In these academic works one found, with astonishment, that the writers, though having worked separately, came at the end to the same findings and reached the same conclusions! A colleague of mine, joking about this situation, commented that this sympathy of conclusions proves the unity of Orthodoxy! What had actually happened? Each one of the candidates, in writing a doctoral thesis, began his work by reading the chapter on man in the dogmatic manuals of Androutsos or Trembelas. An outline of the subject was derived from this reading. Afterwards, they proceeded to study the patristic text, extracting from it those ideas and pericopes which corresponded with their outline. It is no wonder that, in the end, all participants arrived at the same ideas and results. The patristic texts, in their historical context, were not the real sources of this kind of study; they are, rather, supplementary material substantiating and extending the ideas already expounded by Androutsos or Trembelas. Examination of a subject within its historical context alone makes clear what the real issues are. Persons, ideas, and facts come out of this investigation alive and true; only as such, can they exercise correct influences in our similar questions or queries today.

Without being ungrateful for the patristic work undertaken in our generation, one would expect a more creative impulse to come out of those patristic studies. Failure is due, in my opinion, to the motivation by which we approach the traditional texts. The Fathers and their teaching are celebrated, by most of us, more as preservers and less as challengers of creative thinking. It is interesting to note that men like Chrysostom, Basil the Great, and Gregory the Theologian are considered by many present-day theologians as bulwarks of conservatism. This approach to the past, outside of the historical context of each era, cannot become a springboard for new and creative theological thinking; rather, it serves to confirm and support the ideas and situations which we want to defend. We must, very happily, acknowledge that there are exceptions to this rule. But here we are not talking about exceptions; we are simply expressing an observation with respect to the way we Orthodox look at history. Moreover, this view of history is not limited to the past. Surely, as many will agree, there is, with us, an exaggerated sense of the importance of the past. Talking with theologians one sometimes senses that the Church is nothing more than a matter of the past, that there is no real present or future, and, in the final analysis, that the Church is nothing else but a mere reproduction of the past. There are, of course, some theologians who rightly believe that the present and the future of Christianity should be of the greatest priority for the Church today.

One needs an appreciation for the past, the locus of our roots, as well as a necessary interest in the present and future.

Scholasticism, as far as a proper orientation toward history is concerned, exercised a negative influence upon our theology. It resulted in an overemphasis of religious philosophy, apologetical metaphysics, and a vertical and rational schematization for the whole of our theology! History had no place in such a scholastic elaboration of theology. What can we find concerning history in the well-known dogmatic manuals of our predecessors? These manuals almost all end with a chapter on eschatology. Moreover, they address the issue without suspicion that the ideas of this last, supposedly unimportant chapter, should permeate the treatment of all the dogmatic subjects, the reason being that it gives the biblical/historical perspective within which all the dogmatic subjects must be understood.

It is true that our generation has condemned scholasticism as a method of doing theology. This condemnation, however, did not help Orthodox theologians approach history correctly. It did not always bring back the biblical/historical perspective, a right appreciation of past, present and future. The former place of scholasticism in our thinking has sometimes been replaced by a new brand of mysticism which is also nonconducive to the appreciation of historical realities. Scholasticism as well as mysticism have not been very friendly to historical perspectives.

Everyone present knows, quite well, the importance of Christian eschatology not only for an understanding of early Christianity, but also for contemporary Christian theological thinking. It is appropriate to mention as prominent figures in this movement the names of Albert Schweitzer, Karl Barth, Rudolph Bultmann, and Oscar Cullmann. By the end of the nineteenth century a renewal of theology started under the influence of Christian eschatology, thus giving prominence to the subject of God and time. At the beginning of this century an Athenian professor, Constantine Dyovouniotis, published a study, "The Middle State of the Souls."¹ At the outset he attempts to justify the fact that the subject of eschatology was not among the concerns of Orthodox theologians. Furthermore, the fall of Constantinople and the ignorance which prevailed during the Ottoman period are offered as reasons for such an omission. However, beyond that, Dyovouniotis proceeds to some very important remarks. He writes, "Eschatology is not a part of theology, but the center, or rather the final target of all its content (Phil 3.14), so that one could say that Christian

¹ *Ἡ μέση κατάστασις τῶν ψυχῶν* (Athens, 1904).

theology is, as a whole, eschatology." He goes on to say, "Every doubtful or erroneous development of eschatology cannot but exercise a disastrous influence on the whole dogmatic system of theology and lead it to the neglect of Christian life and to the uncertainty of all belief, because without it we are not sure whether the salvation accomplished by Christ is real and perfect." Dyovouniotis' remarks make clear the simple truth that before the coming of the great eschatological events (parousia, resurrection, the last judgment), it is unthinkable to talk of any perfection of the soul beyond the world and history; any religio-philosophical system promoting this idea would deprive of any meaning the doctrines of the second coming, the resurrection, and the last judgment.

What is alarming is that Dyovouniotis' appeal found almost no response among most Orthodox theologians, who were for the most part still influenced by Eastern scholasticism. The idea of any eschatological perspective in theology sounded to some as something Protestant and to others as a theological peculiarity worthy of neglect.

Bringing us this issue years after Dyovouniotis, Professor John Karmiris wrote a historico-dogmatical study on the subject of Christ's descent to Hades from the perspective of Orthodox theology.² In this study, however, Karmiris deals not with the importance of eschatology for Orthodox theology; rather, he tries only to find the scriptural and patristic foundation for the doctrine of the descent of Christ to Hell. He also stresses the differences existing between Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism concerning certain aspects of this doctrine.

A colleague, Nikos Mitsopoulos, as recently as 1972 in his book *Man's Glory in Christ*³, devotes one of his chapters to the subject. I am familiar with several theologians today, particularly biblical ones, who place eschatology in the proper perspective of their theological understanding of the Gospel. Unfortunately, I am afraid I am not mistaken when suggesting that they are still exceptions. For the most part, however, this theological perspective is not a common one with Orthodox theologians. It is true that this perspective, with real promise, was in existence during the Second Conference of the Orthodox Theological Faculties in Athens (1976). In this respect the document of the Third Preparatory Committee for the forthcoming Great and Holy Synod of Orthodoxy, which was published less than a year ago, was also a pleasant surprise. In this document due respect is rendered

² Ἡ εἰς Ἀδου κάθοδος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐξ ἐπόψεως Ὁρθοδόξου (Athens, 1939).

³ Ἡ ἐν Χριστῷ δόξα τοῦ ἀνθρώπου (Athens, 1972).

to the eschatological dimension of the Church. Truly, we need to recover the eschatological perspective as completely normative in Orthodox thinking. In this way, moreover, we come to the right understanding of history; namely, the historical perspective of Christianity, wherein not only the past, but also the present and future provide criteria for the process of Orthodoxy in the world. Historical perspective means what is really past, present, and future in the hope of the Christian. It means what happens at present in the Church with her spirituality and devotion. It means the direction in which the life of the Church moves.

Our thinking sometimes plays amusing games with the understanding of time which we find in the New Testament. The approach to time by Hellenistic religious, philosophical, moralistic, and metaphysical systems is well known; the result is on the one hand, the neglect of the eschatological teaching of the early Church, and, on the other, the dominance of a moralistic, philosophical, or mystical system of thought about immortality. This reduces the value of the Christian faith for the institution of the Church and history and reduces the idea of a final judgment, the general resurrection and parousia to mere metaphors. Plotinos identified time with the human soul. Are we, as Christians, allowed to do the same? What then would we make of the Church and of ourselves as the "people" of God; as God's kingdom, and as the city of God? The consequences of overlooking the eschatological perspective influence not only spirituality and devotion, that is, the direction of Christian living; they also influence the right understanding of the sacraments. Outside of the biblical meaning of history and eschatology, the sacraments of the Church are understood as symbols and ethical metaphors, not as acts in the life of the people of God. Moreover, a mystical understanding of the sacraments creates of them a spiritual allegory without bearing on the church's history as past, present and future. In theology, when we talk about the "eschatos," we talk about time. Thus, when we push aside the "eschatos," we overlook time and its meaning.

I have already stated that our theological generation has, finally, repudiated scholasticism and all varieties of fundamentalism. However, its excessive orientation toward the transcendental and an indifference for historical realities was reinforced by an awakening of a deep interest in Byzantine mysticism. Speaking on behalf of Greece, I would say that this movement started rather recently, in the decade of the 1950s. Moreover, it was originally intended as a reaction against dead theological scholasticism as well as a polemic against moralistic religious tendencies, modern iconography, and modern music in the Church. Chief advocate for this tendency was the periodical *Kivotos*.

At the outset it recovered Orthodox spirituality from superficial moralist and dry academic theologizing. The movement passed into a new phase with the publication of the writings of Saint Gregory Palamas. Most people thought of this new spiritual trend as a reaction against an ongoing secularizing materialism and consumerism; it sounded like a solution to overcome the day's despair about man's existential problems as well as a way out of the problems on the international political horizon. Soon, however, within theological circles, a kind of theological absolutism developed concerning Saint Gregory Palamas, who was thought of as a kind of perfect theological revelation; in comparison to which all previous and subsequent theological work in the Church was child talk. According to this view, great Fathers of the Church had given us only baby food; adult food was given to us by Gregory Palamas. Palamas was not, of course, responsible for this absolutizing of certain aspects of his thought; a rich thought of a very high level, conditioned tremendously by the social and political factors of his time.

We, here, are not expected to enter into either a presentation or evaluation of Saint Gregory's teaching. The modern mystical movement which evolved around his name is centered on his teaching, which was interpreted as being somehow against nature, reason, history and culture. I am aware that there are a variety of interpretations concerning this subject. My opinion, however, is that many contemporary mystical theologians aligning themselves with the name of Saint Gregory Palamas, irrespective of whether they say it or not, interpret his teaching as being at odds with nature, reason, history, and culture. The mystical movement in Greece did not develop haphazardly. It emerged immediately after the Greek civil war; with the sentiment of anti-communism still in the air. At the same time, with the introduction of new technology in the country, Greece, during the 1960s, experienced an industrial revolution, urbanization, and an influx of western culture from Europe and America throughout the country. This phenomenon caused reaction even within secular Greek circles. It was the Greek Church, however, which became the protagonist in the movement against the westernization of the country, posing objections to the introduction of certain changes in the country's family laws on the grounds that the Greek people would thereby lose their identity.

We are all aware of the Greek Orthodox Church's attitude toward the Ecumenical Movement. I think I need say no more about the social and political milieu out of which the new mystical movement sprang forth. Today's danger from the West being cultural, and from the East political, there is some parallelism in the two dangers which Saint

Gregory Palamas himself faced in his own time. Nor do I want to launch into a criticism of Palamism from the theological or historical point of view. I want, instead, only to state that some of the teachings of Palamas, as well as certain social and political circumstances in the decades of the 1960s, gave rise to a new mystical theological movement. Personally, I believe that this new mysticism, as far as Greece is concerned, has a negative impact on the problems facing our churches in these times; it is a retreat into an unrealistic, suprahistorical and individualistic position. Fortunately, the movement has an elitist character. Theologizing, of this sort, is limited to only some theologians and intellectuals; it lacks a wider influence upon the people.

We need a proper understanding of history, one which cannot be realized by either setting aside the eschatological element in our theological tradition, or by adopting the various forms of suprahistorical mysticism. The importance of eschatology in history versus suprahistorical mysticism for Orthodox theological thinking today is a matter which I am sure will come up again and again in the discussions of this conference, interested as it is to see how Orthodoxy leaves the second and enters the third millennium.

At the outset of this introductory address a second group of theological issues was mentioned, those referring to the Orthodox Church's specific role within the Ecumenical Movement. All those who have expressed ideas regarding this matter address the ways in which Orthodoxy would benefit other partners in the Ecumenical Movement. Eastern Orthodoxy is considered, in this respect, a witness and an invitation to embrace the old, undivided Church of the first millenium of the Christian era. This has been rightly understood as a return of all Christians to the common roots of our faith. Androussos himself, like many theologians in the East and West, understood the role of Orthodoxy as a mediatory and conciliatory body between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism. Within this picture, Orthodoxy is presented as something perfected, without need of change. Later, a modified proposal became necessary: the entrance of the Orthodox Church in the Ecumenical Movement. This modification was conceived as a renewal of all the churches, including the Orthodox, in the Holy Spirit. Moreover, it offered as a starting point the unity of the churches, in love, as was the case in the early centuries. Orthodoxy, however, in order to play any such protagonist role, must feel sure of itself and secure about the experiences of the Roman Catholics and Protestants. What we have observed thus far, however, is that the stance of Orthodoxy within the Ecumenical Movement is, from beginning to end, completely defensive. At this point it would be

helpful to recall my aforementioned remarks on the need of the Orthodox seriously to recover historical thinking. Without a spiritual and theological renewal, Orthodoxy will be unable to effectively contribute anything to herself or to the churches of other denominations. Only a spirit of sincerity, humility, and love can break the ice of centuries. Superficial and naive pretensions of superiority have, to date, been proven ineffective.

Moreover, Orthodoxy in facing other Christians must on the one hand clarify the meaning of conciliarity and episcopacy, and, on the other, the meaning of the priesthood of the laity. It was the previous generation of our theologians, including several bishops, who began the struggle to change the image of the bishop/despot which was a remnant of the past political and historical conditions of the Orthodox people. This effort was to change that image to that of the true bishop. In today's era of secularism, all the more, the image of the bishop/despot is quite obsolete. This matter should be studied on the basis of the Church's historical tradition, the Bible, and contemporary requirements. Because the office of the bishop has had a history in the Church, its history must be studied carefully. The same is true with the conciliar structure of the Church a wide and significant problem of which, I am sure, those involved with the preparation of the great synod will tell us more. It was only a few months ago that a Roman Catholic synod of bishops, meeting in Rome was preparing to discuss problems facing the priesthood today; a committee had been appointed to invite fifty priests as representatives of the group concerned! I am afraid we are far behind the Roman Catholics in the application of conciliarity. With us such a meeting should be representative of the whole body of the Church (on all important church matters), with a structure guaranteeing fellowship of the whole *pleroma* of the church body. In certain Orthodox areas exaggerated views on the importance of the person of the bishop have reached an apogee. Some people speak of a theology of the bishop which is nothing else than the theology of the Church; bishop and Church have come to mean something identical. These theories become typical within certain national churches where the bishops form a special authoritarian group. In periods of crisis, these isolated authoritarian groups develop the most peculiar theories about themselves. They usually command a monopoly of power which transforms the rest of the people and clergy into passive and neutral spectators in the Church's life. Thus, the Church becomes the business of the bishops, to the exclusion of everyone else.

I remember, from my student years a very lively theological discussion concerning the priesthood of the laity. It failed to bring any results

because of a conflict between the Church hierarchy and the country's religious organizations. The problem, though seriously propounded, was tactfully bypassed. It is, however, in this way that we reached, unprepared, the present crisis between the Church and the government in Greece. Many crises could have found a positive resolution if there were a theological understanding of the potential of the lay people in the Church as active members of the body of Christ, as active members in the Spirit, and not as passive spectators of the hierarchical operations. Without a renewed theology of the laity Orthodoxy will be unable to offer any service either to Roman Catholics or Protestants.

Orthodox and non-Orthodox recognize the contribution of the Orthodox Church in the Ecumenical Movement. There has been, however, an expectation that Orthodoxy can offer much more to the Ecumenical Movement by merely being herself, that is to say, by presenting herself in a clearer manner as the fellowship and the freedom of the Spirit. Facing the third millennium with its new horizons and problems, the Ecumenical Movement can find its hope only in the power and the freedom of the Spirit of God.

There remain one or two comments on the third group of theological issues: "On Church and Society" and "Within a Secularized, Technological World."

In today's world there exists a strong expectancy and demand by millions of people that now is the time in which Christianity must act for the salvation of the human race. This sentiment has been expressed by many intellectuals in a variety of ways. This demand is articulated on the one extreme by radical thinkers like Erich Fromm and on the other by conservative thinkers and politicians like the Greek Panayiotis Kanellopoulos, in his book, *Christianity and Our Times*.⁴ I refer especially to Kanellopoulos because he is a conservative, yet at the same time a spokesman of the Western world and culture. His vision of the West today, however, is like that of ancient Rome at the time of its decline, the period when Christianity began its historical march. Characteristics in both cases include, on the one hand, the danger of the barbarians knocking on the doors of the empire, and on the other hand, the spiritual vacuum in the soul of the late Roman and contemporary Western society. He finds in East and West the same indifference and ignorance of spiritual foundations for all reality. Further, he views a renewed Christianity as the only power that can perhaps supply this reference in both East and West,

⁴ *Ὁ Χριστιανισμός και ἡ ἐποχή μας* (Athens, 1984).

thus, leading both to a reconciliation and human society into a new historical unity of culture. This means that the nature of the existing dialogue needs not only strengthening, but also a new quality. It should be noted that the conciliatory role of the churches in today's world affairs is expressed, by millions of people throughout the world, in relation to the nuclear war threatening humanity with extinction. We cannot set our hopes on the equilibrium of nuclear weapons between East and West. The churches, as so many people demand today, must take an initiative as one Christian front; they must take a leadership position in the support of peace and justice, with sincerity and fidelity to the Gospel. Such a posture, according to the belief of the masses, is the only way for humanity to escape the present impasse. At times, one senses that now is a very critical time for the testing of Christianity itself: the future of our religion may stand or fall with certain decisions necessarily taken at this moment, the result being whether humanity is to face either extinction or a new era. If other factors are to help humanity to overcome today's impasse, it will be these factors which assume world leadership in the third millennium. The situation is urgent. Convening an ecumenical council of all Christian churches on peace and justice is a priority. An all-Christian crusade against nuclear tests and the stockpiling of weapons, particularly nuclear and chemical weapons, should begin immediately. The demand for the destruction of nuclear warheads, throughout the world, is also the Church's task at this moment; I would say, pre-eminently, it is the Church's task today. The saving and conciliatory work of the Church, for the survival of human life and moral values will, in this respect, render its greatest service to humanity, and will give Christianity a new confidence in looking towards the future, toward the third millenium.

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Chronicle

GEORGE C. PAPADEMETRIOU

THE IMPORTANT MEETING OF THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE of Orthodox Theological Schools was held in Brookline, MA, from August 30 through September 4, 1987, at the invitation of Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in celebration of its fiftieth anniversary. Representatives from graduate schools of theology and academies, as well as several seminaries in Greece, Turkey, the Soviet Union, Romania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Lebanon, Finland, Australia, Kenya, Canada, and the United States, gathered together for this significant event. The only prior convocations of this kind were two such meetings held in Athens, Greece, in 1936 and 1976.

The general theme of the conference was "Icon and Kingdom: Orthodoxy Faces the Twenty-first Century." This theme refers directly to the Seventh Ecumenical Synod which marked its twelve hundredth anniversary in 1987. The conference, therefore, focused on the contemporary significance of Jesus Christ as God's unique image, the human person as the image of God, and the Church as the sacramental image of God's kingdom.

The conference commenced with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy by Archbishop Iakovos, Primate of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas, Metropolitan Silas, President of Hellenic College/Holy Cross, the Rev. Alkiviadis Calivas, Dean of Holy Cross, and other dignitaries and official delegates.

Special blessings were read from His Holiness, Patriarch Dimitrios of Constantinople, as well as messages and greetings from Church leaders here and abroad. In addition, Metropolitan Theodosios, Primate of the Orthodox Church in America, visited the conference and also bestowed blessings and prayers for its success.

On the evening of August 30, the keynote message was given by Professor Savas Agourides of the University of Athens Theological

School. His timely address, entitled "An Assessment of Theological Issues Today," gave a perceptive analysis of contemporary theological issues facing Orthodoxy today. He classified these three parts: 1) issues related to the identity of Orthodox theology today in relation to contemporary Christian thinking, world ideologies, and world religion; 2) issues related to the special mission of the Orthodox Church in the ecumenical movement; and 3) issues concerning the relations of Church and society within a secularized technical world. Furthermore, he called for an immediate "all-Christian crusade" against nuclear tests and "all kinds of weapons, particularly nuclear and chemical."

The remainder of the program for the duration of the conference consisted of presentations of papers, meditations, and discussions by the following Orthodox scholars and professors.

The morning session of August 31 opened with an inspiring meditation by Professor George Bebis from Holy Cross. Following this meditation, a paper was presented by the Rev. Dr. Alexis Kniazeff from St. Sergius in Paris on the topic of "The Kingdom of Caesar and the Reign of Christ." He made twelve proposals as starting points for action aimed at achieving Christ's kingdom. The moderator for this session was the Rev. Dr. Paul Tarazi from St. John of Damascus Seminary, Balamand, Lebanon, and St. Vladimir's Seminary in Crestwood, New York.

The second session was a panel presentation by the Holy Cross faculty on the topic "The Message of the Church Contextualized." The panelists were the Rt. Rev. Dr. Demetrios Trakatellis, the Rev. Dr. Alkiviadis Calivas, the Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Clapsis, and the Rev. Dr. Stanley Harakas. Each presented a brief paper on the Church in America and its task to fulfill its sacred mission within the American context. The moderator for this session was Dr. Lewis Patsavos from Holy Cross. Bishop Demetrios Trakatellis discussed the divine revelation in the Word, that is, the Gospel in the secularized world. The contemporary question Christians are compelled to ask concerns the meaning of a theological enterprise in the secular context. In secular culture today the dominant social and political philosophies reject religion and theological enterprises. The other pertinent question concerns the place and role of divine revelation in the secular context. The tension between immanence and transcendence is quite clear.

Fr. Emmanuel Clapsis focused his discussion on the contextualization of the faith as *theoria* and *praxis*. He stated that we must not limit theology only to understanding the world, but to changing it in accordance with the principles of God's kingdom.

Fr. Alkiviadis Calivas spoke about "Orthodox Worship in the

American Context." He stressed that worship of God in the Church transcends all chauvinism and radical individualism. A life in Christ, promised by the Eucharist, makes a real difference in the lives of the people of God.

Fr. Stanley Harakas in his presentation emphasized: 1) the role of Christian values and 2) this role in a military context, and particularly, in a nuclear context. He expressed the idea that an Orthodox Christian must clearly *reject* nuclear weapons. This inaugural session proved to be excellent, addressing timely issues which led to sound and heated discussions.

Bishop Methodios of Boston hosted a luncheon for the official representatives at the Diocese Center and offered a warm greeting and an opportunity for the representatives to share in fellowship with one another.

In the afternoon the representatives attended a reception held in their honor at the Cotsidas-Tonna Library. The author offered greetings and spoke about the library collection.

In the third session the following presentations were made: "Eschatological Dimensions of the Church," by the V. Rev. Dr. Athanasios Yevtic from the Belgrade Theological Academy, and "Icon and Church in the Book of Revelation," by Dr. Petros Vasiliades from the University of Thessalonike School of Theology. Professor Yevtic gave an excellent presentation on the eschatological character of the icon and the Church. The Church as *community* is not confined only within historical human society but is the assembly (*synaxis*) of all God's children from the beginning of creation (Rom 8.23). The Church is not a perfect society on earth but is instead, the liberating force in creation, i.e., man is liberated from the oppression of the world. The Church offers renewal through sacramental rebirth, and especially in the *parousia* of Christ. Professor Vasiliades presented an in depth scholarly paper on "Icon and Church in Revelation." He explored the biblical foundation of the Christian theology of images in relation to the Seventh Ecumenical Synod. The moderator for this session was the Rev. Dr. Thomas Hopko from St. Vladimir's Seminary, New York.

The evening meditation was given by the Rev. Dr. Paul Tarazi and following dinner, a warm fellowship took place at the Maliotis Cultural Center, the site of all the conference meetings.

On Tuesday, September 1, the meditation given at the morning worship service was offered by the Rev. Lawrence Barriger from Christ the Savior Seminary, Johnstown, PA.

The fourth session began with the presentation of "Biomedical Technology of the Kingdom or for the Cosmos" by the Rev. Dr. John

Breck from St. Vladimir's Seminary, New York. In an inspiring and scholarly manner, he focused on contemporary biomedical moral issues that preoccupy Orthodoxy today. The moderator of this session was Dr. Veselin Kesich, also from St. Vladimir's Seminary, New York.

The fifth session continued with the discussion on "Kingdom and World." Dr. Mikhail Stepanovic Ivanov from the Moscow Theological Academy and the Rev. Dr. Constantine Voicu from the Institutut Teologic Ortodox de Grad Universitar, Romania, offered papers on "Orthodox Theology and Ecological Problems." Professor Ivanov emphasized man's attitude towards nature, specifically the love and care man has for nature within the theological context of Orthodoxy. He stated, however, that the "ecological question is a worldwide, global issue" that all humanity must face. Professor Voicu similarly expressed his concern for the purity of the ecological environment today in the midst of technological progress. The Rev. Dr. Jaroslav Suvarsky from Pravoslavna Bohoslovecka Fakulta, Czechoslovakia, moderated a lively discussion after the two presentations.

On Tuesday afternoon and evening the official representatives took a delightful excursion to Newburyport, MA, where the mayor of the city hosted a reception and presented to all a memento from the city. Fr. Stanley Harakas and the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church of Newburyport hosted a dinner at the church hall following vespers. At the vespers the Rev. Dr. Thomas Fitzgerald from Holy Cross offered the meditation.

On Wednesday, September 2, at the morning prayer service, the Rev. Dr. John Meyendorff gave the meditation, and the sixth session of the conference was underway.

The topic of the sixth session was "Aspects of the Seventh Ecumenical Synod." The Metropolitan Iossif Bossakov spoke on "The Iconoclastic Controversy — Historical Perspective," and the Rev. Dr. Blogoy Tchiflianov spoke on "The Iconoclastic Controversy — Theological Perspectives." Both Metropolitan Iossif and the Rev. Dr. Tchiflianov are from the Theological Academy of St. Clement of Ochrida, Bulgaria. They both addressed the problems of the use of icons in the past and the importance of icons today. Father Tchiflianov presented the dogmatic definitions of the councils and the fathers concerning icons. He considered both the opponents and proponents of icons, iconoclasts and iconodules, respectively. The definition of the Church Synod of 787 clearly forbids the worship of icons stating that "only to God is worship due," and it supports the veneration of icons. Fr. George Christulides from Holy Cross moderated this session.

The presentations for the seventh session were by Dr. Nikolai Zablotsky from the Leningrad Theological Academy, on "The Aesthetics of Iconography," and the Most Rev. Dr. Athanasios Papas from the Theological School of Halki, Turkey, on "Religious Art in the Polis in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries." Professor Zablotsky also distributed a paper which was not read, on "The Seventh Ecumenical Council Today." He discussed the importance of the Seventh Ecumenical Synod beyond the veneration of icons; that is, the canonical and the Christological issues of the day as well as the continuation of the Orthodox faith and its legacy for today. Metropolitan Athanasios Papas discussed the importance of Greek Orthodox religious art in Istanbul during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and the influence of western religious art on iconography of that genre. In addition, he gave historical perspectives of the artistic creations of Greek Orthodox religious artists in Constantinople. The moderator for this session was Dr. George Bebis from Holy Cross.

The Rev. Dr. Jaroslav Suvarsky from Czechoslovakia presented a paper on the "Message of the Icon." He stated: "Today as well as in the future, at a time when technology offers new possibilities of cognition, especially by vision such as television and video, the revelation of the mystery, that is, of the deep sense of the icon has great and promising possibilities for faith dissemination." The message of the icon is an invitation to look from the visible world into the mystery of the invisible world, just as Christ, the divine mystery, was revealed to humanity through his physical incarnation.

In the afternoon, a reception was given in honor of the participants at the Department of Religious Education, where Mr. Ernest Villas, director, offered warm greetings.

Afterwards, the eighth session followed. The Rev. Dr. Aurel Jivi from the Institutut Teologic Ortodox de Grad Universitar, Romania, presented a paper on the "Relevance of the Seventh Ecumenical Synod." His paper was a penetrating investigation on the importance of the Seventh Ecumenical Synod for Orthodox theology in relation to contemporary Christianity. The moderator for this session was Prof. John Erickson from St. Vladimir's Seminary.

At the vespers Dr. Elias Moutsoulas from the University of Athens School of Theology offered a meditation, extolling the mystery of the icon which includes the divine economy of the incarnate Logos and the truth of man and God.

On Wednesday evening, following dinner, an organizational meeting of official representatives took place. Dr. Constantin Andronikof from St. Sergius, Paris, presided. At this meeting, the necessity

of the International Conference of Orthodox Theological Schools was affirmed. It was voted and passed that this conference would meet every five years in a specific location decided by the official representatives of the schools. The next meeting will be in 1992, at the Orthodox Church in Romania. A five-member committee was elected to plan the details of this next meeting.

On Thursday, September 3, the Rev. Dr. Matti Sideroff from the Finnish Orthodox Theological Seminary offered the meditation at the morning matins.

The ninth session followed on the topic "Kingdom and Church." Dr. Vlasios Pheidas from the University of Athens School of Theology presented a paper on "Those Outside the Church," and Rt. Rev. Dr. Anastasios Yannoulatos from the University of Athens and St. Makarios III Seminary in Kenya presented his paper on "Facing People of Other Faiths from an Orthodox Point of View." Professor Pheidas stated in no uncertain terms that the sacramental grace of Christ is channeled through the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, that is, the Orthodox Church, which in fact, maintains and perpetuates the faith of the Apostles undefiled. Professor Pheidas also emphasized the importance of the canons in ecclesiology that concerns those who stand outside the Church. He made an excellent and scholarly presentation of traditional Orthodoxy held through the centuries. Bishop Yannoulatos summarized the classification of other non-Christian religions and spoke of God's relation to the world through his glory. His thesis was that in Orthodoxy we begin with the Trinitarian doctrine, which allows for a relationship of all religions with Christianity. All religions, he stated, have a common root: the *transcendental reality*. The incarnation of the Logos relates to the entire world. The Logos "enlightens every man who comes into the world." Also, the Logos relates to all people through the *spermatikos logos* (the seminal reason) that is in every man. This approach was well received by most of the participants. The moderator for this session was the Rev. Nicholas Kastanas from Holy Cross.

In the tenth session Dr. Constantine Scouteris of the University of Athens School of Theology presented his paper "Doxology, the Language of Orthodoxy." He pointed out that Wittgenstein, Hare, Ayers, and others have taken a new philosophical approach to knowledge through linguistic analysis. In their approach, verification of the truth of statements does not allow room for knowledge gained from experience above and beyond the limits of this world. In other words, transcendental experiences were not valid to offer as evidence for statements. Orthodoxy approaches the spiritual experience through silence. The doxological approach of the Divine

Logos is related to the human logos as manifested in worship. The task of theology is to develop the divine logic, or *theo-logos*, that relates all human beings in the act of worship. The moderator for this session was the V. Rev. Tymofit Minenko from St. Andrew's College, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

The eleventh session dealt with the topic "Kingdom and World." The Rev. Dr. Victor Petuchenko from Odessa Theological Academy delivered a paper on the "Threat of Nuclear Holocaust." He emphasized the threat of nuclear extinction and the Christian responsibility for peacemaking. He stated that "one thing is absolutely clear: we need reconciliation, and the common language of love which will be the basis for peaceful existence." This is learned in the Church where Christ, the Prince of Peace, dwells. The moderator for this session was Dr. Kyriaki FitzGerald from Holy Cross.

In the evening the official representatives participated in an excursion to Worcester, MA, where they visited all the Orthodox parishes there. Each pastor spoke of the history and activities of the parish. A dinner followed at the Antiochian parish where greetings were offered by the local church officials.

On Friday, September 4, the meditation at the morning matins was given by Dr. Constantin Andronikof from Paris.

The topic of the twelfth session was "Kingdom and Person." Dr. Remus Rus from the International Institutut Teologic de Grad Universitar, Romania, presented his paper on "Freedom and Person," as did the Very Rev. Archimandrite Platon Igoumnov from Moscow Theological Academy on "Freedom and Personality." Professor Rus spoke of the importance of freedom in the human person. The human as an authentic person has no value without freedom. The image of God is the freedom of a man not dominated by the powers of the nation. Fr. Platon made an excellent theological presentation on the freedom of the human personality. He spoke of the freedom of God, the freedom of creation, and the freedom of man. His paper may be summarized in the following statement: "For a man who possesses the highest spiritual value, choice is no longer a problem, as he has already chosen his way of life, has found the source of joyful existence, living inspiration and truth, and thus has predetermined all future choices. Value illuminates from inside the whole human life, filling it with real freedom and opening to creativity." The moderator for this session was the Rev. Dr. George C. Papademetriou from Holy Cross.

Fr. Igoumnov distributed another paper that was not read at the conference on the topic "Search for Peace." It stated: "the aspiration of each man and all humanity is to enjoin peace, the absolute

and eternal gift commanded by the Gospel, as a necessary condition to all levels of human relations.”

The final session of the conference consisted of a panel of several theologians who discussed “Conference Reflections in Future Theological Work and the Role of Theological Schools.” The moderator was the Rev. Dr. Theodore Stylianopoulos from Holy Cross. A discussion took place on how Orthodox theologians approach theology today and the importance of international cooperation among schools and faculties of Orthodox theology.

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David's Prayer in Saint John Chrysostom's *Explanations of the Psalms*

ELENI C. SIMMONS

WHEN SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM ADDRESSED AN AUDIENCE, WHETHER in person from the pulpit or in written treatises, he exhibited an extraordinary understanding of human nature and the vicissitudes of daily life. His primary concern was to raise people up and draw them closer to Jesus Christ. He constantly tried not only to teach them how to live their lives in a more Christ-like manner, but also how to improve their spiritual lives. One of his frequent topics in this regard was prayer, and in his *Explanations of the Psalms* he deals extensively, though not exclusively, with this subject.¹

Chrysostom's remarks about prayer in the *Explanations* are not so much about different kinds of prayer (doxological, supplicatory, etc.) as about the goal of having your prayer heard, whatever it is. His treatment of this aspect of prayer revolves around the Prophet David and how he made himself pleasing to God so as to be heard

* Translations of scriptural quotations are based on Sir Lancelot C. L. Brenton's *The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English* and the *Nestle-Aland Greek-English New Testament*. In both instances I have made some modifications in the interest of modernization of the language. Throughout this study Old Testament references are based on the naming of books and the numbering of chapters and verses in Alfred Rahlfs' edition of the Septuagint, and the Septuagint numbering of the Psalms is followed throughout.

¹ As we now have it this work deals with all or part of 58 psalms, but it has been believed as far back as Saint Photios that Chrysostom commented on the entire Psalter, and that what we have is approximately one-third of the complete work. J. Bareille, *Oeuvres Complètes de Saint Jean Chrysostome*, Trans. and notes, vol. 8 (Paris, 1867), p. 525.

by him. In explaining Psalm 7, which he describes as a hymn of thanksgiving to God, written by David after his victory over his son Absalom,² Chrysostom lists six conditions for being heard by God when we pray:

- First, to be worthy of receiving;
- Second, to pray in conformity with the laws of God;³
- Third, to pray continuously;
- Fourth, not to ask for earthly goods;
- Fifth, to seek the things that are truly profitable for us;
- Sixth, to contribute everything that is in our power.⁴

The relationship between prayer and life in general is such a central motif of the *Explanations* that it is often difficult to separate Chrysostom's teaching about prayer from his general moral exhortations. The life that a person leads, the way he treats his fellow human beings, and what lies deep within his heart are as necessary to successful prayer as the words themselves. Nor is there a particular style of words that will please God; it is the meaning of the words and the feeling behind them that counts.

The influence of Saint Paul's writings is evident here. Paul speaks often about living a life worthy of God, and in Col 1.10 he describes such a life as "bearing fruit in every good work." In I Thessalonians 5.17 he exhorts Christians to "pray constantly," but Chrysostom's elaboration of his third condition in the *Explanations* reflects even more Paul's exhortation to the Romans (12.12) to "be constant in prayer" and his statement to the Ephesians (2.8): "I desire then that in every place the men should pray." In Romans 12.2 Paul tells them not to be conformed to this world, and he chastises the Philippians (3.19) for having their minds set on earthly things. Chrysostom himself makes the connection between his fifth condition and Saint Paul when he uses Paul's prayer that the thorn in his side be removed as an example of a prayer that is for something which is not profitable.

There can be no doubt that Saint Paul had a profound influence on Chrysostom's teachings. References to Paul and his writings are

² Saint John Chrysostom, *Explanations of the Psalms*, "Explanation of Psalm 7," in PG 55,83. Hereafter, in all references to the *Explanations*, Chrysostom's name will be omitted as understood.

³ Chrysostom's phrase is "κατὰ τοὺς νόμους τοῦ Θεοῦ."

⁴ "Explanation of Psalm 7," PG 55.85.

found in abundance in all of Chrysostom's works, and in some of his works (though not in the *Explanations*) he speaks of his unbounded admiration for Paul. Chrysostom does more with Paul than simply repeat passages. He has completely immersed himself in Paul's writings and thus he freely uses the theological content of the Pauline corpus to illustrate his subject of the moment. An example of this can be seen here in Chrysostom's six conditions. With the exception of 1 Thessalonians 5.12 (pray continuously), these examples from Paul do not specifically relate to prayer, but to Paul's exhortations to live a more Christ-like life. The connection between living a Christ-like life and successful prayer is Chrysostom's own contribution.

This study is based on Chrysostom's six conditions, as he explains them not only in his remarks on Psalm 7, but in his entire work on the Psalms. For purposes of this study I have divided them into two categories: the first and sixth, dealing with living and praying so as to be heard by God, and the second through fifth, dealing with the content of prayer.

In the *Explanations* Chrysostom speaks of the psalmist as "the prophet," and it becomes obvious that not only is this prophet one single individual, but that he is David. The six conditions involve a person's entire way of life, and for Chrysostom's words to effect that way of life it is necessary that he involve his reader on a very personal level. By presenting David as the author of the Psalms, and using events from his life in explaining them, Chrysostom offers the reader a real person with whom to relate. In so doing he provides a more profound involvement with the text than is usually the case with commentaries on the *Psalms*.

LIVING AND PRAYING SO AS TO BE HEARD BY GOD

To be worthy of receiving necessarily requires that we contribute everything that is in our power. Both of these things call for a way of living, and a manner of praying, that will cause God to be open to our prayers. For Chrysostom, David is the teacher *par excellence* on these matters. He is not only worthy of being heard by God, but is also worthy of being held up as a model for others.

Worthiness in prayer

In speaking of David's pursuit by his son Absalom in the "Explanation of Psalm 7," Chrysostom's emphasis is on David's reaction to this affliction, for this is where the true character of a man

shows forth. Even after Absalom had killed his brother, Chrysostom says, David treated him kindly,⁵ and although Absalom then turned on his father and forced him to become a fugitive in fear for his life, David could still say to his soldiers, "Spare for my sake the young man Absalom," (2 Kings 18.5)⁶ When Absalom's death was reported to David he cried, "My son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom, would I had died instead of you . . ." (2 Kings 18.33)⁷. David suffered great adversity at the hands of his son, but as a result, says Chrysostom, he shone more brilliantly, like gold in a furnace, becoming more pure by the ordeal.⁸

In David's isolation and apparent weakness, Chrysostom sees him as an example of the triumph of virtue over vice because, he says, virtue has God for protection and support.⁹ And he exhorts us to imitate the example offered by David with his words, "O Lord my God, in you have I trusted, save me" (Ps 7.2).¹⁰ This exhortation clearly links high moral quality with prayer.

David's high moral quality is apparent from his first appearance in the Bible, where he is depicted as not only having God's favor, but also as always having God in his heart and mind. In 2 Kings 7.14-16, God declares that he will establish David's kingdom forever and will chasten him when he sins, but will not take his mercy from him as he took it from Saul.

Since for Chrysostom a life of high moral quality is necessary for a successful prayer life, what he has to say about David's great sin with Bathsheba is important, perhaps crucial, to understand his teaching about the sinner's relationship to God, and his chances for successful prayer. In the *Explanations* as we have them today Chrysostom makes only two brief references to this subject. In the "Explanation of Psalm 6" he says David committed murder, yet enjoyed the benevolence (φιλανθρωπία) of God,¹¹ and in the "Explanation of Psalm 4" he speaks of the cruel pain David experienced by

⁵ "Explanation of Psalm 7," PG 55.104.

⁶ Note: In the Septuagint, 1 and 2 Kings, or more precisely, 1 and 2 Kingships, corresponds to 1 and 2 Samuel in the Hebrew Bible and in the English translations.

⁷ "Explanation of Psalm 7," PG 55.100. Note: in Rahlfs' edition of the Septuagint this verse is 19.1.

⁸ "Explanation of Psalm 7," PG 55.81.

⁹ "Explanation of Psalm 7," PG 55.82.

¹⁰ "Explanation of Psalm 7," PG 55.83.

¹¹ "Explanation of Psalm 6," PG 55.73.

consequence of his guilty passion.¹²

Chrysostom offers a lengthy comment on this matter in his "Homily Thirty six on Matthew," where he calls David's committing adultery and murder a "sickness," made worse by the fact that he was not only a virtuous man but a prophet. But Chrysostom emphasizes David's "speedy recover" from this sickness, for he did not sink into despair but repented and became pure once again.¹³ Elsewhere he describes David's way of repenting:

by humbleness, contrition of heart, compunction of soul, by falling into the like no more, by remembering it always, by bearing thankfully every thing that befalls him, by sparing those that grieve him, by forbearing to requite those who conspire against him; yea, even preventing those who desire to do this.¹⁴

In the psalms explained by Chrysostom we have evidence of all this. As we have already seen, David's behavior toward Absalom is evidence of his forbearance. That he bore this thankfully we can see in Psalm 7 when he says, "I will give thanks to the Lord according to his righteousness; I will sing to the name of the Lord most high." (7.18) Chrysostom says that David's use of the future tense here indicates that neither did he forget the good things which he had received nor did he become more slothful, but he was sober-minded and vigilant.¹⁵

Repentance in Prayer

According to Chrysostom, when we have sinned we will be worthy of God's mercy if we have ceased to sin.¹⁶ In Psalm 6.3, David prays, "Pity me, O Lord, for I am weak." Chrysostom says that David is giving here one of the reasons we obtain pardon for our sins — the weakness that results from temptations.

When David goes on to say, "I am worn out because of all my enemies" (Ps 6.8), for Chrysostom this is an indication that he knows

¹²"Explanation of Psalm 4," PG 55.44.

¹³Saint John Chrysostom, "Homily 26 on Matthew." In *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Series 1, Vol. 10 (Grand Rapids, 1983) pp. 182-83.

¹⁴"Homily 4 on 2 Corinthians," *NPNE*, Vol 12, p. 299.

¹⁵"Explanation of Psalm 7," PG 55.104.

¹⁶"Explanation of Psalm 6," PG 55.74.

that the tribulation he bears is a powerful means of attaining mercy and making him favorable to God. This is why, says Chrysostom, his tears of repentance are likely to be heeded: "I shall wash my bed every night; I shall water my couch with my tears" (Ps 6.7).¹⁷ Chrysostom insists that nothing renders us more worthy of the mercy of God than the sincere avowal of our sins.¹⁸

Prayer During Times of Affliction

Chrysostom speaks of affliction as a means of making those who suffer it better and more wise.¹⁹ A soul plunged into an abyss of evil turns to God, he says. This is the fruit of tribulation — it pulls the soul out of its sleep, makes it implore help from above and detaches it from all hopes of this life.²⁰

Chrysostom says that David's prayer, "Save me from all those who persecute me and deliver me" (Ps 7.2), was one way in which he spared those who grieved him, because he uses moderate language to speak of his enemies rather than enumerating their crimes against him.²¹ He saw his son become the prey of the devil who had devoured him, Chrysostom declares, and he begs God to save him from a similar misfortune.²² Chrysostom has much more to say about what our attitude should be toward our enemies, but this will be dealt with below under the subject of praying in conformity with the laws of God.

In times of affliction, it is natural to turn to God in prayer, but Chrysostom emphasizes that we must do so with humility, as does David when he says, "Pity me, and hearken to my prayers" (Ps 4.2). Humility, says Chrysostom, is part of virtue,²³ and is necessary in order for the one praying to be worthy. When, in Psalm 12.6, David cries, "But I have hoped in your mercy," Chrysostom says that although David could without doubt invoke the memory of many good works to obtain an answer to his prayer, in his humility he confines himself to invoking God's mercy.²⁴ And, he adds, it is the virtue of humility that inspired David to say, "A broken and humbled heart God will not

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸"Explanation of Psalm 140," PG 55.438.

¹⁹"Explanation of Psalm 117," PG 55.330.

²⁰"Explanation of Psalm 120," PG 55.344.

²¹"Explanation of Psalm 7," PG 55.84.

²²Ibid.

²³"Explanation of Psalm 4," PG 55.44.

²⁴"Explanation of Psalm 12," PG 55.152.

despise" (Ps 50.19).²⁵ In Psalm 143.2 David calls God, "My mercy, and my refuge; my helper and my deliverer." What humility, says Chrysostom, in recalling that it is from God alone that he must obtain mercy.²⁶

In explaining Psalm 9, Chrysostom points out that many prosperous people become complacent and negligent in their duties toward God and their fellow man, and when misfortune strikes they fall into despair. But, he says, this did not happen with David. Even though he lived in a palace, he continually devoted himself to the poor and indigent.²⁷ Prosperity brings him to proclaim his gratitude to God, says Chrysostom, and affliction inspires in him recourse to prayer.²⁸ No matter what the circumstances, David's first reaction is to pray. This is why Chrysostom proclaims: "You have David for a teacher."²⁹

Chrysostom considers David our teacher because he provides an example with his virtuous life as well as with the way he prays in the Psalms. Using David as the example, Chrysostom exhorts: "So let us do all that which depends on us, and we will render ourselves worthy of the greatest praise."³⁰ And there is a great deal that we can do, not only by the way we live our life, but also by our physical and emotional attitude during prayer.

Doing All That Depends On Us

Chrysostom asks, "What are the things that depend on us?" and immediately offers his first example. If someone hates you, love him and do good to him. If he insults and ridicules you, bless and praise him.³¹ As further examples he says we must flee from hate, anger and vengeance,³² and bear insults nobly, turning the other cheek when struck.³³ For just as God is said to have enemies, not turning away from them but abhorring their wicked deeds, he says, so the righteous man has enemies without retaliating against them, but

²⁵"Explanation of Psalm 142," PG 55.450.

²⁶"Explanation of Psalm 143," PG 55.458.

²⁷"Explanation of Psalm 9," PG 55.128.

²⁸"Explanation of Psalm 141," PG 55.445.

²⁹"Explanation of Psalm 12," PG 55.153.

³⁰"Explanation of Psalm 7," PG 55.88.

³¹"Explanation of Psalm 7," PG 55.88.

³²"Explanation of Psalm 7," PG 55.88.

³³"Explanation of Psalm 7," PG 55.89.

turning away from their wickedness.³⁴ Chrysostom reminds us that Saint Paul exhorts Christians to suffer injustice rather than to do it, and that Christ commands us to be struck and not to strike back. This is a manifestation of great strength, he says; this is what forms patience, this makes the soul strong and renders it superior to all unrest.³⁵

In Psalm 5.5 ("You hate all evildoers. You destroy those who speak lies. The Lord abhors bloodthirsty and deceitful men.") Chrysostom says the prophet is teaching us a lesson on the necessity of conforming our life to that of the master (God) in order to render us worthy of approaching him.³⁶ Men of iniquity make excuses and banish fear from their hearts, says Chrysostom, and so give their souls a chance to fall back into the same sin. This is why, he says, David constantly commands, as an essential action of virtue, to avoid all commerce with them, as he says in Psalm 140.4: "Incline not my heart to evil things, to employ pretexts for sins, with men who work iniquity." And Chrysostom also believes this is why David begins the Book of Psalms with these words: "Blessed is the man who has not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, and has not stood in the way of sinners, and has not sat in the seat of evil men." (Ps 1.1)³⁷

It is not enough to pray in order to be heard, says Chrysostom, but we also have to make a contribution of ourselves, as David does when he prays, "Teach me to do your will, for you are my God . . . and I am your servant." (Ps 142.10-12). And Chrysostom exhorts us not only to pray but to join our prayers to a holy life.³⁸ In the same way that a good life glorifies God (Mt 5.16) an evil life blasphemes, as God said to the Israelites through the prophet Isaiah: "On account of you my name is continually blasphemed among the gentiles." (Is 52.5)³⁹ So, he exhorts, let us heed the words of Christ, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (Mt 5.16), and, he adds, let our life precede our mouth.⁴⁰

³⁴ "Explanation of Psalm 7," PG 55.90.

³⁵ "Explanation of Psalm 7," PG 55.103.

³⁶ "Explanation of Psalm 5," PG 55.65.

³⁷ "Explanation of Psalm 140," PG 55.438.

³⁸ "Explanation of Psalm 142," PG 55.456.

³⁹ "Explanation of Psalm 113," PG 55.309.

⁴⁰ "Explanation of Psalm 112," PG 55.300.

Because Chrysostom believes that fervent prayer softens and moves a heart more energetically than fire, he cautions us when we pray not to plan only to get what we pray for, but to make the sort of prayer that makes our souls better.⁴¹ And in writing about Psalm 120 he exhorts as follows: Let us take care not to remain in negligence and laxness. Let us work actively for our salvation. Supply God the occasion and motive to reward you. Do all that depends on you and God will do the rest.⁴²

Involvement of the Body in Prayer

In addition to a good life, Chrysostom calls for the involvement of the body in prayer, as indicated by the psalmist in Psalm 140. Verse 2 says: "Let my prayer be set before you as incense, the lifting up of my hands as an evening sacrifice." What is the significance of raising the hands during prayer? Chrysostom asks. The hands, he responds, are the instruments of a great number of crimes—blows, murder, theft. If they are raised in prayer they cannot commit iniquity while we are praying. It is not a crime to pray with hands that have not been washed, he says, but to raise them toward God soiled by a thousand iniquities is to provoke God's anger. We must purify them by almsgiving, benevolence (φιλανθρωπία), and helping those in need.⁴³

According to Chrysostom, the psalmist exhorts us to apply the same rule to our mouths, when he says, "Set a watch, O Lord, on my mouth." (Ps 140.3)⁴⁴ Invoking the words of Saint Paul as an example ("Let no evil talk come out of your mouth" (Eph 4.29)), and reminding the reader of Jesus' words ("Men will render account for every careless word they utter" (Mt 12.36), Chrysostom says we must not let an injurious thought into words, and if envy inspires words of anger, we should keep our mouths shut.⁴⁵ Chrysostom offers the following formula to govern speech: If you form the habit of not saying any useless word, if your spirit like your mouth surrounds itself continually with the stories of Holy Scripture, you will have the most

⁴¹"Explanation of Psalm 129," PG 55.374.

⁴²"Explanation of Psalm 120," PG 55.345.

⁴³"Explanation of Psalm 140," PG 55.431.

⁴⁴"Explanation of Psalm 140," PG 55.432.

⁴⁵"Explanation of Psalm 140," PG 55.433.

secure guard.⁴⁶

Chrysostom points out that the role of the voice in prayer must not be separated from the role of the heart and spirit. It is not necessary, he says, to have a strong or resounding voice in order to pray. When the psalmist says, "O Lord, I have cried to you, hear me" (Ps 140.1), Chrysostom says he is speaking of an internal cry which leaves a soul full of love and a contrite heart. Chrysostom is distressed by those who are present in the temple but do not cry to God. They pray with their lips, he says, not their spirits. They are not paying attention to what they are saying. Then he offers Moses and the Publican as examples of those who prayed fervently. Moses, praying with fervor, was answered. Even the Publican, a sinner, when he prayed with fervor and preserverance, received what he prayed for.⁴⁷ The one who is lazy and does not pay attention to what he is saying, says Chrysostom, is not crying out to God, but is calling out loudly in vain. And he adds that the one who does not arouse his mind, even if he should make a great clamor, does not cry to God. But not so the psalmist, who says, "I cried to the Lord with my voice. With my voice I make supplication to the Lord" (Ps 141.2). Here, Chrysostom declares, we see a soul truly disengaged from all the cares of the earth.⁴⁸

It is not only our language, but our eyes, our hands, our feet and our ears which can, in Chrysostom's words, sing the praises of God. This is accomplished, he says, when the eyes do not look at indecent things; when the hands are not stretched out for robbery but for almsgiving; when the ears are receptive only to the singing of psalms and spiritual instruction; when the feet run toward the church; when the heart is not a servant of plots but full of love; then our body becomes a harp and lyre, and leads a new song, not only through words but through deeds.⁴⁹

When David says, "Out of the depths have I cried to you" (Ps 129.1). Chrysostom says, he is praying from the bottom of the heart, and such a prayer has great power because it cannot be turned away or shaken by attacks of the devil. Prayer which is only from the mouth and lips does not come from the depth of the heart, he cautions, and

⁴⁶"Explanation of Psalm 140," PG 55.434.

⁴⁷"Explanation of Psalm 140," PG 55.428.

⁴⁸"Explanation of Psalm 141," PG 55.442.

⁴⁹"Explanation of Psalm 143," PG 55.462-63.

cannot rise up to God because it is weakened by the indifference of the one who prays. Anything will distract it, he says. The least noise or agitation will divert the one who prays from the prayer, because the mouth makes the sound, but the heart is empty and devoid of understanding.⁵⁰

It is not thus that the saints prayed, says Chrysostom, and he offers several examples. The Prophet Elias sought solitude and prayed with attention and fervor. Hannah, the mother of Samuel, prayed from the bottom of her heart with streams of tears. The one who prays like this, he declares, imposes silence on the passions of the soul, soothes anger, banishes malice, extinguishes lust, weakens the love of the things of the earth, and establishes calm in his heart.⁵¹

WHAT AND WHAT NOT TO PRAY FOR

Let us turn now to the content of prayer. Chrysostom says that we must pray in conformity with the laws of God; pray continuously; not ask for earthly goods but seek the things which are truly profitable for us. In the "Explanation of Psalm 7" he offers a few examples to illustrate these points, but to provide a better understanding examples from other Explanations will be offered as well.

Conforming to the Laws of God

How does one pray in conformity with the laws of God? Chrysostom does not offer examples of this kind of prayer directly, nor does he identify the laws to which he is referring. He discusses this point by speaking of prayer which is *not* in conformity with these laws, and in all of these instances he is speaking of prayer against enemies. This is an important subject for Chrysostom, to which he returns over and over in the *Explanations*.

When Chrysostom speaks of praying against enemies in explaining Psalm 7 he has in mind the following: "Pray for those who persecute you and do good to those who hate you" (Mt 5.44).⁵² When discussing the same subject with regard to Psalm 4 he invokes the Gospel of Luke: "Pray for those who persecute you" (Lk 6.36).⁵³ In the same work he also speaks about the Centurion Cornelius,

⁵⁰"Explanation of Psalm 129," PG 55.373.

⁵¹"Explanation of Psalm 129," PG 55.373.

⁵²"Explanation of Psalm 7," PG 55.86.

⁵³"Explanation of Psalm 4," PG 55.46.

described in Acts as "a devout man who feared God . . . gave alms liberally . . . and prayed constantly to God" (10.2). Cornelius was visited by an angel of God who told him: "Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God" (Acts 10.4). Chrysostom says that these were not simply prayers, but prayers that conformed to the laws of God, which had as an object things worthy of God to give and which did not ask anything in opposition to his laws. And who, he asks, would be so daring as to ask for such a thing? The one who prays against his enemies, he says, for God himself said, "Forgive us our debts" (Mt 6.12).⁵⁴

Let us demand nothing which prevents the giving, says Chrysostom. For when you are asking against your enemies, the help that you implore is not just, for it is in opposition to the law of the giving God.⁵⁵ The true supplicant must be careful not to take the language of an accuser, for the one who prays against his enemies is an accuser more than a supplicant.⁵⁶ Chrysostom also speaks of this practice in explaining Psalm 140, and asks how God can answer a prayer in opposition to his laws.⁵⁷

Many psalms appear to contain just this kind of prayer, and Chrysostom addresses himself to this matter on several occasions. For example, Psalm 5.11 reads, "Because of their many transgressions cast them out." Chrysostom says that the psalmist is concerned not for himself but about the outrage his enemies have committed against God, and indicates in the latter half of the verse the fruit of his prayer, "But let all who take refuge in you rejoice." He is praying that those who have committed this outrage will become better and abstain from evil.⁵⁸ In Psalm 6.11 David says, "Let all my enemies be put to shame and sorely troubled." This is not a prayer against them but for them, says Chrysostom. For just as one tries to stop someone walking toward a cliff, so the psalmist wants his enemies to cease sinning.⁵⁹ The prophet seems to be even more graphic in Psalm 9.36: "Break the arm of the sinner and wicked men." But according to Chrysostom he does not want the ruin of the sinner, but the destruction of his strength, his power, and the iniquities which devour

⁵⁴"Explanation of Psalm 4," PG 55.45.

⁵⁵"Explanation of Psalm 7," PG 55.95.

⁵⁶"Explanation of Psalm 5," PG 55.64.

⁵⁷"Explanation of Psalm 140," PG 55.429.

⁵⁸"Explanation of Psalm 5," PG 55.68.

⁵⁹"Explanation of Psalm 6," PG 55.79.

him.⁶⁰ In Chrysostom's view the prophet's solicitude is evident in the following: "Let the Lord destroy all the deceitful lips, and the tongue that speaks great words . . ." (Ps 11.4-5), because he is praying that God put an end to their iniquities, rather than asking God to ruin them personally.⁶¹

Finally, Chrysostom offers the apostles as examples to be imitated in this regard. Though they suffered persecution, were thrown into prison and exposed to great danger they sought refuge in prayer. But they did not pray for the ruin or death of their persecutors; they prayed for the ability to speak God's word "with boldness" (Acts 4.29) and to do "signs and wonders" through Jesus (Acts 4.30). And Stephen, the first martyr, prayed for those who were stoning him (Acts 7.60).⁶²

Chrysostom warns that when we pray we must suppress feelings of anger, speak no words of vengeance, and purify our souls of the venom that soils them. Doing this, he says, and invoking God from the bottom of our hearts will assure that our prayers will be heard even before they are finished.⁶³ He further cautions that prayer must not have anything merciless, but must be full of calm and sweetness.⁶⁴ Therefore, according to Chrysostom, when we present ourselves before God let us strike a chord in favor of our enemies. It is thus that our prayer will merit answer.⁶⁵

Praying Continuously

Chrysostom also urges us to pray continuously, because nothing so contributes toward virtue as to continually speak with God, and to perpetually give thanks and sing to God.⁶⁶ During his entire life, Chrysostom points out, David glorified God by his words and his deeds.⁶⁷ In temptations, in trials, in persecutions, Chrysostom advises his readers, do as David did and render glory to God and do not cease to bless him.⁶⁸ Chrysostom urges that whether old or young, we must give thanks to God. This, he says, is the aim of Psalm 148 — to show

⁶⁰"Explanation of Psalm 9," PG 55.139.

⁶¹"Explanation of Psalm 11," PG 55.145-46.

⁶²"Explanation of Psalm 140," PG 55.429.

⁶³*Ibid.*

⁶⁴"Explanation of Psalm 4," PG 55.44.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*

⁶⁶"Explanation of Psalm 7," PG 55.104.

⁶⁷"Explanation of Psalm 144," PG 55.465.

⁶⁸"Explanation of Psalm 5," PG 55.71.

us that we must praise the Lord in all things, no matter who we are.⁶⁹ We must also persevere in our prayers of supplication, he says, and not become discouraged when they are not answered immediately.⁷⁰

The prayer of penitence is another prayer which requires continuity in terms of perseverance. Commenting on Psalm 6.7, "I shall wash my bed every night. I shall water my couch with my tears," Chrysostom says that here the psalmist passes all his life in tears of repentance.⁷¹ This is an example for us, he says, of how we should behave when we have sinned, removing ourselves from those who sin and praying to God every night with tears upon our bed.⁷² For Chrysostom the Psalms provide an example for us of constant prayer. In every circumstance of life the psalmist turns to God in prayer. When we persevere in prayer we too will obtain what we ask for — if it is useful.⁷³

Seeking Things Truly Profitable, Not Earthly Goods

To ask for something useful is not to ask for earthly goods but to seek the things which are truly profitable for us, declares Chrysostom. The prayer of Psalm 140 is such a prayer, he says. Chrysostom points out that in this psalm David asks nothing against his enemies, nor does he ask for riches or excess, power, glory or other perishable things, but only for incorruptible and immortal things.⁷⁴ Chrysostom uses Solomon as another example of someone whose prayer was answered because he asked only for spiritual things. Solomon asked for an understanding mind to govern the people (3 Kings 3), and in recompense for his spiritual prayer he received even things he did not ask for.⁷⁵ Not only did he receive legendary wisdom, but also great riches and honor.

As Chrysostom explains, when the psalmist prays, "Lord, lead me in your righteousness" (Ps 5.9), this is a request not for perishable and transitory things of this life, but for an alliance on high. For in this life, which is like a road, we need God as a guide to take us by

⁶⁹"Explanation of Psalm 148," PG 55.492.

⁷⁰"Explanation of Psalm 122," PG 55.351.

⁷¹"Explanation of Psalm 6," PG 55.76.

⁷²"Explanation of Psalm 12," PG 55.153.

⁷³"Explanation of Psalm 122," PG 55.352.

⁷⁴"Explanation of Psalm 140," PG 55.429.

⁷⁵"Explanation of Psalm 43," PG 55.174.

the hand and show the way.⁷⁶ Chrysostom insists that it is necessary to seek God's help if we want our efforts to succeed.⁷⁷ "Teach me to do your will, for you are my God," says the psalmist (Ps 142.10). All his prayers are spiritual, declares Chrysostom. He does not ask for money or power or glory, but to do the will of God.⁷⁸ Again in Psalm 143, argues Chrysostom, the psalmist disdains all goods and declares that "blessed is the people whose God is the Lord" (Ps 143.15).⁷⁹ Sinful desires, an inclination toward the things of this life and devotion to the earth weigh down the heart.⁸⁰ Virtue is the only thing worth having in this life.⁸¹ These, according to Chrysostom, are the things that we should ask for in prayer.

Chrysostom offers a further elaboration on this point in commenting on Psalm 7.11: "My help is righteous," says the prophet. Chrysostom comments: That is to say, 'Let God deal with me in a righteous manner, because I ask nothing unjust.' If then we want to enjoy the alliance from above, he says, let us ask only that which is in conformity with justice, so that by the nature of the petition we will assure the assistance of the one "who saves the upright in heart" (Ps 7.10).⁸² But your prayer is not just if you ask for riches, beauty or some other passing favor of the present life.⁸³

Even if the one praying is righteous, the prayer may not be answered because it is not for something profitable, as Chrysostom says in explaining Psalm 7:

For who was more righteous than Saint Paul? But because he asked for something which was not profitable, he was not heard. "Three times I besought the Lord about this," he says, "that it should leave me; but he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you' " (2 Cor 12.8-9). And again, who was more righteous than Moses? Nevertheless, he too was not heard, since God said, "Let it suffice you" (Deut 3.26). Because he was asking to enter into the promised land, and this was not for his good,

⁷⁶"Explanation of Psalm 5," PG 55.66.

⁷⁷"Explanation of Psalm 140," PG 55.431.

⁷⁸"Explanation of Psalm 142," PG 55.456.

⁷⁹"Explanation of Psalm 143," PG 55.463.

⁸⁰"Explanation of Psalm 4," PG 55.47.

⁸¹"Explanation of Psalm 9," PG 55.128.

⁸²"Explanation of Psalm 7," PG 55.95.

⁸³*Ibid.*

God did not allow this.⁸⁴

Closing Remarks

In his work on the Psalms, Chrysostom excels at the pastoral exhortation for which he is so well known. The six conditions for being heard by God which he lists in the "Explanation of Psalm 7" clearly encompass every aspect of life. A person may be *worthy of receiving* only when he lives a good and pious life. Chrysostom constantly exhorts the reader to this life; almost everything he says is designed to draw one closer to God and further away from sin. Because the quality of a person's life directly affects the effectiveness of his prayer, all of Chrysostom's moral exhortations could be said to relate to prayer. But those remarks with which he specifically draws a correlation between the two provide a "road map" for the one who prays, and this is what the present study has attempted to highlight. In the same way, *praying in conformity with the laws of God*, *praying continuously*, *not asking for earthly goods*, and *seeking the things that are truly profitable for us* are directions with which Chrysostom attempts to steer the reader down the right path to God. And only when we have met all of these conditions have we contributed *everything that is in our power*.

The goal of our constant efforts, says Chrysostom, must be not only to pray, but to pray in a manner to be heard. Because, he goes on to explain, prayer is not enough to obtain what we ask for, if we do not put on those conditions which will render it agreeable to God. For the Pharisee prayed but his prayer served him not at all. The Jews also prayed, but God turned away from their prayers, because they had not prayed with the required conditions. This is why God commands us to present to him a prayer which would be of the kind to be heard. This is what David has taught us in Psalm 6. Psalm 6 is not the only place where David teaches us about praying so that we will be heard. Throughout the Psalms, Chrysostom says, David exhorts us to the knowledge of God and to live a holy life.⁸⁵ He takes on the role of teacher as well as prophet, intermingling with prayer sometimes counsel,⁸⁷ sometimes encouragement.⁸⁸

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵"Explanation of Psalm 7," PG 55.84-85.

⁸⁶"Explanation of Psalm 4," PG 55.49.

⁸⁷"Explanation of Psalm 43," PG 55.175.

⁸⁸"Explanation of Psalm 43," PG 55.179.

And in Psalm 148 David shows us that it is not enough to sing the praises of God by ourselves, but that all creation must take part in his pious songs: "Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you stars and light" (Ps 148.3).⁸⁹

In Chrysostom's *Explanations* of the Psalms are truly David's prayer, and this work offers not only moral exhortations and guidelines on prayer, but is also a substantive work on the intertwining of prayer with the personality of the Prophet David and the teachings of St. Paul. This study and the data provided should prove helpful for students of prayer and spirituality, as well as students of both patristics and exegesis.

"Few books of the Old Testament have been read more than the Psalms, because, whether it be through Jewish and Christian liturgy, or through personal study, they seem to come closest to the heart of believers."⁹⁰ I believe this is the level at which Chrysostom's genius is most active. Where his comments deal with the "human heart, its motives, its weakness, or with the grace and love of Jesus Christ, there Chrysostom rises, and remains 'the Master in Israel.'"⁹¹

Just as the Psalms themselves touch the heart of man, so also do the *Explanations* of Saint John Chrysostom.

⁸⁹"Explanation of Psalm 148," PG 55.485.

⁹⁰J. Alberto Soggin, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, Revised Edition, trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia, 1980), p. 363.

⁹¹M. B. Riddle, "St. John Chrysostom As An Exegete," in *NPNF*, Series 1, Vol. 10, p. xxi. (This introductory article was written in 1888.)

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Doxology, the Language of Orthodoxy

CONSTANTINE SCOUTERIS

FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS GREAT EMPHASIS HAS BEEN PLACED ON THE issue of theology. Its nature, task, method, and language have been a matter of study, explanation, investigation, and exploration by a great number of scholars, both Orthodox and those of other Christian traditions.¹

Although this can be viewed as positive from one vantage point, from another it reveals that, at the present time, theology is often in a condition of crisis and, to a certain extent, confusion. Our contemporary theologizing is quite often characterized either by a sense of self-sufficiency or artificial openness, the former manifesting itself in a mere repetition, a sort of conservative attachment to the past, the latter taking the form of a kind of modern, abstract, religious speculation. No sensitive observer will deny that in our theological scene there often exists a gulf between the so-called "academic"

¹Among other studies we mention the following: N. A. Nissiotis, "La Theologie en tant que science et en tant que doxologie," *Irenikon* 23 (1960) 291; C. E. Papapetrou, *The Essence of Theology* (in Greek) (Athens, 1970); C. B. Scouteris, *The Meaning of the Terms "Theology," "to Theologize," and "Theologian" in the Teaching of the Greek Fathers up to and Including the Cappadocians* (in Greek) (Athens, 1972); A. Fermet and R. Marle, *Theologies d'aujourd'hui*. J. Robinson, J. Ratzinger, H. Cox, H. Zahrnt, J. Moltman (Paris, 1973); and E. L. Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel of Christ. An Essay in Reorientation* (London, 1977). See also the collective work, R. VanderGucht and H. Vorgrimler, eds., *Bilan de la Theologie du XXe siecle* (Paris, 1970).

theological community and the ecclesiastical pastoral concerns of those responsible for the spiritual welfare of the people of God. Theological work and pastoral responsibility are very often scandalously treated as two different tasks.

It is certainly not my desire to be either skeptical or negative at such a gathering as the Third International Conference of Orthodox Theological Schools. However, it seems to me essential that reality be faced in order not to build castles in the sky. In order that our investigation be honest, clear, and constructive, it is of paramount importance to realize where we stand and what we represent.

The initial question concerning the theme for discussion should be posed as follows: What is the significance of "doxology, the language of Orthodoxy," in our modern age? What does doxology mean in our contemporary reality? The point being, do we have a clear enough vision to understand what doxological theology is in an era when our minds have been, to a great extent, obscured and our theological and ecclesiastical consciences too often secularized or confused? The question demands an answer in terms of serenity, sincerity, frankness, and clarity.

From the patristic point of view, "doxology" is the essence of Christian life. Our subject, therefore, becomes vital and essential, demanding careful consideration and full attention. We are not discussing a matter for pure contemplation, a philosophical problem. Nor are we discussing a question of dialectic, not even a simple way of theologizing. We are, rather, discussing a reality directly connected with faith, love, and communion with him, from whom "every good endowment and every perfect gift" (Jas 1.17) flow.² When we speak of doxology, we are obliged to touch upon the heart, the very being, of Christian understanding and of Christian life itself. Indeed, when we speak of "doxology," we stand very much at the center of Orthodox theology.

Before proceeding to a discussion of the subject at hand, it would be appropriate to examine the terms "doxology," "theology," and "orthodoxy." In fact, the meaning of these three terms, in the writings of the Greek Fathers, interpenetrate one another and the terms are often used interchangeably. Doxology is "the word (*λόγος*) about glory." But glory, in the final analysis, is God himself; the "unmoved glory" (*ἡ ἀκίνητος δόξα*), in the words of Saint John Chrysostom.³

²See also the "prayer behind the Ambon" in the Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom.

³Saint John Chrysostom, *Ἑρμηνεία εἰς τὴν πρὸς Ῥωμαίους Ἐπιστολὴν* 3, 4; PG 60.413.

God is the absolute glory, glory and perfection itself ("αὐτοδεδοξασμένος καὶ αὐτοτέλειος"), according to Saint Epiphanius.⁴ In this sense, the terms doxology and theology describe the same reality. Doxology is the λόγος about glory (i.e. about God). Doxology and theology are, therefore, identical. This identification was fully expressed by Origen when speaking of prayer. Thus, commenting on Matthew 6.7, he exhorts Christians not to "use vain repetitions," but to theologize, i.e., to ascribe glory to God.⁵ Moreover, it is well known that this is not the only instance where Origen uses the term "theologize" to indicate the glorification of God. In several of his writings, both the terms theology and doxology are used interchangeably and as equivalents.⁶ From Origen on, especially in the so-called ascetical tradition, identification of theology and doxology become more self-conscious and obvious. The well-known words of Evagrius constitute a summary, "If you are a theologian, you will pray in truth; and if you pray in truth, you are a theologian."⁷

On the other hand, the term "orthodoxy" indicates not merely right opinion or belief as opposed to heresy, but also right glorification; more accurately, right glorification encompassing right belief and a right way of expressing it. Thus, right doxology or, simply, doxology is a more comprehensive definition than right belief.

We may add in this connection that, according to Orthodox understanding, doctrinal tradition is not exclusively an intellectual system. Rather, it is inextricably bound together with liturgical action. It is within the worshiping community, and in light of the community's liturgical life that doctrine becomes "a field of vision where in all things on earth are seen in their relation to the things of heaven."⁸ In this respect, the *lex orandi* becomes the focus of the

⁴Saint Epiphanius, *Katὰ αἰρέσεων* 69, 74 in K. Holl, ed., *Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller* (GCS) p. 222, 14-15; PG 42.321D.

⁵"Προσευχόμενοι μὴ βαττολογήσωμεν ἀλλὰ θεολογήσωμεν," Origen, *Περὶ Εὐχῆς* in P. Koetschau, ed., *Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller* p. 345, 3-4; PG 14.480C.

⁶See for example: Origen, *Εἰς τὸν Ἱερεμίαν* Hom. 18 in E. Klostermann, ed., *Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller* p. 158, 9-15; PG 13.176A; *Εἰς Ψαλμὸν* 67 in J.B.C. Pitra, ed., *Analecta Sacra Spicilegio Solesmeni Parata* Vol. 3 (Paris, 1883), p.80; *Εἰς Παροιμίας Σολομῶντος* PG 13.24AB. For a further discussion of Origen's understanding of theology and doxology, see Scouteris, *The Meaning of the Terms "Theology,"* pp. 81-85.

⁷Evagrius, *Περὶ Προσευχῆς* PG 79.1180B. V. Lossky referring to this passage of Evagrius reaches the conclusion that: "theologie gnose de la Trinite et oraison sont synonymes pour Evagre," *Vision de Dieu* (Neuchatel, 1969) p. 271.

⁸G. Every, *The Byzantine Patriarchate* (London, 1947) p.ix. Quoted in T. Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (Harmondsworth, 1969) p. 271.

lex credendi, of the *lex cognoscendi*, and of the *lex vivendi*. Dogmas, in other words, are not abstract speculations in and of themselves. Likewise, Christian life is not moralistic and external behavior based on regulations and laws. Both doctrine and the Christian way of life are understood within the liturgical context. Within the worshipping community, doctrine becomes that action which constitutes the highest point of the Christian way. Thus, the Orthodox approach both to doctrine and the Christian life is fundamentally a liturgical one.

For an Orthodox, it is self-evident that theology, as God's doxology, has not the characteristics of an individual, monistic dialogue between the theologizing person and God; but, although personhood remains its locus, it is an ecclesial offering. The theologizing person apprehends, in his theology, the mind of the ecclesial body and offers it to God; his own from his own, in a unique and personal way. I believe that it is this ecclesial conscience of theology that we express in our Liturgy when, immediately before our confession of common faith in the triune God, the Creed, we urge: "Let us love one another that with one mind we may confess the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."⁹ The one and only rock upon which theology as a doxological event can be based is the ecclesiastical body. It is within the Church, this continued Pentecost, that our mind, which is very often deprived of any orientation toward God, can be reoriented toward him, and, indeed, be illuminated and transformed into a theological mind. Moreover, it is only within ecclesial reality that the transfiguration of the human person can be accomplished. The Church herself is not a secular community, but "the tabernacle of God," which, in spite of the fact that she is here and now, transcends time and space and belongs to the "age to come"; the point being, that the ecclesial community is "gathered together" by the Holy Spirit. It is the "other Paraclete," he who maintains the ecclesial oneness, who thus secures solid ground for a genuine theological offering. It is he who transforms, within the Church, simple human persons into "theologians."¹⁰ It is he only "by whom we cry out, Abba, Father" (Rom 8.15). In fact, when we speak of doxology we mean an action of the Spirit, "for we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Rom 8.26).

⁹The Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom.

¹⁰This is explicitly pointed out in a hymn of Pentecost: "The Holy Spirit provides everything; He overflows with prophecy; He fulfills the priests and has taught wisdom to the illiterate. He has elevated the fishermen to theologians. He gathered together the entire institution of the Church. O Comforter, consubstantial with the Father and the Son and sharing the same throne, glory to Thee."

The Question of Language

Theology as doxology, prayer, and orthodoxy of necessity employs the medium of language. In fact, it is an act carried out by language. When we speak of language in this context, we do not necessarily restrict it to the narrow limits of the created and spoken word. Expressed words do, indeed, represent part of theological language, but not its totality, and certainly not its highest part. I would venture to say that expressed words correspond to a minimum of theological language, which, in its essential part, transcends words and expressions.

My intention here is not to introduce a sharp distinction between the expressed and "inexpressible" word. On the contrary, I intend to underline the fact that language, both as an expression of divine truths (προφορικός λόγος), as well as an inward, immanent event (ἐνδιάθετος λόγος) is a unique reality and constitutes an essential element of theology.

The fact that there exists an inexpressible theological language has already been recognized by the well-known philosopher of language Ludwig Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein speaks specifically of the peculiarity of religious language. In his *Tractatus logico-philosophicus* Wittgenstein recognizes that there are truths of religion which "cannot be put into words" (*Unaussprechliches*). For such truths we must remain silent. Silence here means that for religion and ethics we cannot always use "propositions" as we do for the natural sciences. From this perspective, religious language is to a great extent a distortion of language. Yet it is precisely through this distortion that religious truths become evident.¹¹

In spite of the fact that in Wittgenstein's approach there is room to express through language what is known as mystical experience, there is still a substantial difference between his philosophy of language and its biblical, patristic understanding. Besides, by Wittgenstein's inability to explain how the mystical can be made evident, we observe that his entire system is based on an absolutely anthropocentric structure. The experience of God and the word about him are exclusively based on man and confined within the boundaries of human possibilities. In his theory of language there is absolutely no room for an experience which transcends human effort and ability; an experience such as that of Saint Paul who "was caught up to the third heaven . . . and heard inexpressible words" (2 Cor 12.2-4).

¹¹See: L. Wittgenstein, "Tractatus logico-philosophicus." In *Schriften 1* (Frankfurt am Main, 1969), 6.42, 6.421, 6.45, 6.522. See also: H. O. Mounce, *Wittgenstein's Tractatus. An Introduction* (Oxford, 1981) pp. 99-100. C. Boudouris, *Wittgenstein's Theory of Meaning in Greek* (Athens, 1972) pp. 120-121.

Wittgenstein can easily accept a language of faith, or even a religious language, that expresses something transcending all human learning which is carried out by language; but in his philosophy there is no place for language which is given to men as grace.¹² The fundamental truth pointed out by Paul that, "the Spirit himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered," remains something absolutely foreign, paradoxical, and even scandalous to human understanding.

In order to reach a better understanding of what language represents, from a biblical and patristic point of view, it is, I think, necessary to explain this issue further. According to Orthodox understanding, all processes concerning the communication of divine truths are closely interwoven. Speech, contemplation, and even communion with God through mystical experience constitute an indivisible unity. This unity is summarized, to a great extent, in the term "logos" (word). This term, a Greek term par excellence, is multi-sensed. As an expressed word, both oral and written, it can be viewed as a composition of words and phrases which become the means whereby men understand one another. On the theological level, the expressed word is the way of transmitting transmittable divine truths which can be transmitted by created words. For logos as inward, immanent power is understood as contemplation. Logos as contemplation about God excels logos as expression of him. Such has already been said by Plato and repeated, in one way or another, by certain of the Greek Fathers.¹³ The point being that although it is hard to form an adequate concept of God, it is even harder to express it. Thus, logos as contemplation has wider possibilities than logos as expression, logos as truth excels both contemplation and expression. Logos as truth is the Divine Logos, who "became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (Jn 1.14).

Thus, the Greek term "logos" was adopted by Saint John the Theologian and thereafter by the entire Christian tradition to designate the Son, the second person of the one and undivided Trinity, he who alone "knows the Father" (Jn 10.15) and reveals him "to

¹²This is a point which occurs in the teaching of the Fathers. See, for example, Didymus the Blind, *Περὶ τῆς Ἀγίας Τριάδος* 3, PG 39, 825A; *Εἰς Ψαλμοὺς* PG 39, 1129A. Eusebios, *Τῆς Ἐκκλησιαστικῆς Θεολογίας* 1, 20. In Klostermann, *Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller* p. 96, 7-10; PG 24.892C.

¹³Plato, *Τίμων* 28c. See also Cyril of Alexandria, *Ἑρμηνεία εἰς τὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην Εὐαγγέλιον* 14, 20 in P. E. Pusey, ed., p. 480. PG 74, 237A. Saint Gregory the Theologian changes the abovementioned phrase as follows: "Θεὸν νοῆσαι μὲν χαλεπὸν φράσαι δὲ ἀδύνατον." *Λόγος* 28 A J. Mason, ed., p. 26; PG 36.29C.

whom he wills" (Mt 11.27). The incarnation of the eternal Logos of God has, therefore, given new and unique perspective to theology. Through the self-emptying of the divine Logos the eternal truth of God was transmitted to men and expressed within the narrow limits of human language. The incarnate Logos spoke to man about God in a human way (ἀνθρωπίνως). He did so using words, images, parables, and concepts, in order that men might be able to speak of God in a way worthy of Him (θεοπρεπῶς)¹⁴

Origen comments that the Son of God is called Logos because that which is rational, and indeed, endowed with reason, is revealed in his person. He is called Logos because it is he who has transformed our life, one devoid of reason (πᾶν ἄλογον ἡμῶν), into a new reality and made us truly rational (κατὰ ἀλήθειαν λογικούς). Thus, "whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor 10.31). In other words, through his incarnation the Divine Logos gives us the possibility to be partakers of himself. As such, partaking of the life of the divine Logos constitutes restoration of our original reasonable life. Through participation in the life of the Logos man's life assimilates into the life of God. In Christ man's life becomes a risen life; his mind is elevated to the level of divine rationality.¹⁵ This means that his mind is delivered from every dissolution and disorientation. Moreover, as far as he is a partaker of Christ, his theological language is not merely a human word, but takes on all the strength of the divine Word.¹⁶

I should at this point, in order to avoid any misunderstanding, make clear that theology as an ecclesial function, in its doxological dimension, is not the exclusive province of a certain elite enclave of specialists. On the contrary, it is an open diakonia, a reality of catholic significance. Even though theology is not limited to a certain minority of intellectuals, however, it is as yet not one of the easiest things to do. Saint Gregory of Nyssa refers to theology as a mountain which is not easy to reach.¹⁷ Saint Gregory the Theologian pays more at-

¹⁴Papapetrou, *The Essence of Theology*, p.44.

¹⁵Origen, *Εἰς τὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην 1*, 37 in Klostermann, *Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller* p. 47, 21-29; PG 14.96D. "Λόγος καλεῖται πᾶν ἄλογον ἡμῶν περιαιρῶν καὶ κατὰ ἀλήθειαν λογικούς κατασκευάζων, πάντα εἰς δόξαν Θεοῦ πράττοντας μέχρι τοῦ ἐσθίειν καὶ τοῦ πίνειν, εἰς δόξαν Θεοῦ ἐπιτελοῦντας διὰ τὸν λόγον καὶ τὰ κοινότερα καὶ τὰ τελειότερα τοῦ βίου ἔργα. Εἰ γὰρ μετέχοντες αὐτοῦ ἀνιστάμεθα καὶ φωτίζομεθα, τάχα δὲ καὶ ποιμαίνομεθα ἢ βασιλευόμεθα, δῆλον ὅτι καὶ ἐνθέως λογικοὶ γινόμεθα, τὰ ἐν ἡμῖν ἄλογα καὶ τὴν νεκρότητα ἀφανίζοντος αὐτοῦ, καθ' ὃς ὁ Λόγος ἐστὶ καὶ ἀνάστασις."

¹⁶For a further discussion, see: Scouteris *The Meaning of the Terms "Theology."* pp. 167ff.

¹⁷"Ὅρος γὰρ ἐστὶ ἀναντες ὡς ἀληθῶς καὶ δυσπρόσιτον ἢ Θεολογία, ἥς μὲν ὁ

tention to the preparation and presuppositions of theology. I would like to address only one of these points. In order to answer the question, "How can one theologize?" Saint Gregory speaks of, among other things, inner calmness (σχολή) and spiritual silence.¹⁸ Silence, as a necessary method leading to theology, was also explicitly stressed by Saint Antony, the desert teacher. "In silence," he says in his *Texts of Saintly Life*, "you use your mind, and in using your mind you speak inwardly in yourself; for in silence mind gives birth to word. And a grateful word offered to God is salvation to man."¹⁹

We must admit that in our theological environment we do not often refer to silence. Our theological education overemphasizes the significance of the spoken or written word. Public speaking and homiletics have become basic theological courses in our faculties. Stressed by the mentality of the societies in which we live, we continue to pay less attention to what Saint Gregory calls σχολή, inward calmness and silence. I would say that our theological education suffers from, what I would call, a "Demosthenic" syndrome or a "Demosthenic" complex.

According to a certain biographical tradition, Demosthenes, the greatest Athenian orator, as a young student of rhetoric tried to overcome his stammering and thus obtain fluent speech. He often went to the seaside where by facing the sea and placing a few stones in his mouth, he practiced the art of speaking. Thus, Demosthenes forced himself to become a rhetor. Athenian society, not unlike our modern societies, could only accept "successful" people. I have a feeling that we, too, train and force our students to become "successful" preachers, orators, and teachers of theology. Certainly, this is good from one point of view, but do we really prepare them to appreciate silence? Do we clear for them the way which leads to inner quietness and calm? In the *Gerontikon* we read that, "It was said of Abba Agathon that for three years he lived with a stone in his mouth until he had learned to keep silence."²⁰ Demosthenes and Agathon used the same method to attain diametrically different achievements. What, in fact, differentiates Demosthenes from Agathon is the aim of their *askesis*. The former intended to become an orator; the latter had in view

πολύς λεώς την υπώρειαν φθάνει," Saint Gregory of Nyssa, *Περί τοῦ βίου τοῦ Μωϋσέως*, H. Musirillo, ed., p. 84, 21-22. PG 44.373D-76A.

¹⁸"Δεῖ γάρ τῳ ὄντι σχολάσαι καὶ γινῶναι Θεόν· καὶ ὅταν λάβωμεν καιρὸν κρίνειν θεολογίας εὐθύτητα," Saint Gregory the Theologian, *Λόγος* 27 3, A. J. Mason, ed., p. 5, 6-8; PG 36.16A.

¹⁹B. Ward, trans., *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers* (London, 1981) p. 22.

²⁰Ward, *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, p. 22.

and earnestly desired, to learn to keep silence.

Glory and Glorification.

When we speak of silence, we do not suppose a pathetic, individualistic, and static condition, a kind of distortion of human personality. Silence is not a kind of consequence of anthropophobia. Rather, it is manifested in a deeply interior and spiritual quality. It is an existential, creative power, a healing and redirection of the whole man toward divine life. Silence is a profoundly Christian attitude, directly related to the divine *kenosis*. If we carefully study biblical data related to the highest point of the abasement of the *Logos*, his passion and cross, we realize that Christ confronted his passion in absolute obedience and silence. In response to the question of the high priest: "Do you answer nothing? . . . Jesus kept silence and answered nothing" (Mt 14.60-61 and 26.62-63). Likewise, to the question of Pilate: "Do you answer nothing? . . . Jesus still answered nothing" (Mk 15.4-5). Concerning his sacrifice on the cross, the prophecy of Isaiah certainly offers the most striking summary: "he was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth" (53.7).

I emphasize the issue of silence because silence, not so much as a refusal to speak, but, primarily, as an attitude and as inward behavior, is connected both to the glory of the incarnate *Logos* as well as to the possibility given to us to ascribe glory to God. In this respect we are confronted with the fundamental Christian paradox: silence, as an expression of the extreme self-emptying of the Word, and silence, as his glory, being bound together. It is precisely this paradox which is considered by the Jews a "scandal" and a "stumbling-block" (1 Cor 1.23). For the Jews, the idea itself of the Lord of glory silent and crucified was not only unthinkable, but utter blasphemy. Moreover, according to the wisdom of the Greeks, the idea of a God humiliated, suffering in silence, and unable to succeed in showing his power, was far beyond any imagining, a real foolishness. However, that which is scandal to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks, is, in the final count, "the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor 1.24).

The fact to be clearly and definitely stressed is that the uncreated and eternal glory of God, his power and wisdom, appeared to us through the abasement of God the *Logos*. This is what Saint John has clearly shown in his Gospel: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (1.14). Glory has been transmitted to human reality because God, in his unique and ecstatic

movement, has entered within the limitations of human poverty. He freely condescended to the human level in order that "we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory" (2 Cor 3.18).

In the final analysis, the fact that the eternal glory of God appeared on the scene of human history, through the extreme humility of God the *Logos*, constitutes, yet, the greatest paradox. For Greek society or our modern societies, which strive after progress and success and the acquisition of human glory and power, this is an indisputable contradiction; an open distortion of any law of this world. We as Christians often lack the inner capacity to understand that this contradiction and antinomy lead to truth and the "glorious liberty of the children of God" (Rom 8.21). Our sight is not clear enough to see things as they really are rather than as they appear.

As a point of reminder, regarding this connection, Orthodox iconography personifies but one icon of Christ entitled "the King of Glory." This unique icon is not an image of the Son of God in royalty and dominion, but rather, an icon of Christ exhausted and suffering. In his silent form as a servant, in extreme humility, lacking "beauty" and "form" (Is 53.2), in his mystery of the cross, the enhypostasized wisdom, glory, and power of God the Father revealed to us his glory, his divinity.

That which has been mentioned above, concerning silence and humility, is immediately applicable to the subject of doxology. Doxology is not vain verbalizing or triumphal words; it is, rather, the language of those who have denied themselves and lost their lives (Mt 16.24-25). Doxology is indeed the language of those who have learned to keep silent. Thus, doxology is immediately connected with the life in Christ. It is the consequence of the life in Christ. In fact, doxology is the language of the saints and of all those who follow in the path of humility and obedience. To believe that there exists the possibility of putting forward a language of doxology without holiness is like believing that it is possible to put forward theology without God.

One has to be certain that, when speaking of "doxology as the language of Orthodoxy," Orthodox theologians, in fact, testify to their deep desire and existential agony to maintain and deepen the ethos, spirit and attitude of Orthodoxy. This, indeed, is our challenge and mission.

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which consequently understands Christianity in the categories of pagan Hellenism and its neo-Platonic philosophical articulation" (p. 26).

The five chapters of Section One carefully examine (1) the "Jewish Rite in the Christian Church: Ecumenical Possibility"; (2) "Judaism and Greek Orthodoxy in Historical Perspective"; (3) "Orthodox Christian and Jewish Relations"; (4) Jerusalem in the Orthodox Theological Tradition"; and (5) "An Encyclical of the Ecumenical Patriarch Metrophanes III (1520-1580) Condemning Oppression of Jews." All are consistent in emphasizing the positive and rejecting the negative and stress that an attitude of mutual respect and trust must be cultivated and supported by informed knowledge by which people can come to understand each other and engage in an honest and meaningful dialogue with each other. In the nineteenth century Metropolitan Athanasios of Corfu had strongly asserted that "The threats and inhuman acts against the Jews are absolutely incompatible with the faith of Christ, Who commands us to love all human beings" (p. 2).

Essays on Orthodox Christian-Jewish Relations is unique in that it is the first time that a priest of the Greek Orthodox Church, who has himself engaged in interfaith dialogue for the Orthodox Church, speaks out in some detail on topics of convergence and differences between the two traditions in an effort to explore, sensitively and reasonably, ways in which a productive dialogue can be and must be developed. It is, indeed, a pioneering work that could set the stage for a deeper and more far-reaching interfaith dialogue.

John E. Rexine
Colgate University

Drops from the Living Water: Orthodox Homilies on the Sunday Gospel Readings. By Augoustinos N. Kantiotes, Bishop of Florina. Translation and Foreword by Asterios Gerostergios. Belmont, MA: Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, 1992. Pp. 216. 52 illustrations. \$17.50, hard.

Sparks from the Apostles: Orthodox Homilies on the Sunday Apostolic Readings. By Augoustinos N. Kantiotes, Bishop of Florina. Translation and Foreword by Asterios Gerostergios. Belmont, MA: Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, 1992. Pp. 220. 30 illustrations. \$17.50, hard. Both volumes \$30.00.

The Rev. Dr. Asterios Gerostergios has again rendered all Orthodox Christians a service by translating and publishing two more works by the Bishop of Florina into English. A previous volume entitled *Follow Me* appeared in 1989 and was received in this journal in Volume 35, Number 1, Spring 1990, pp. 82-83. *Drops from the Living Water* was originally published in Greek by the Orthodox Missionary Brotherhood *Ho Stavros* ("The Cross") in Athens in 1973 and *Sparks from the Apostles* was also originally published by the same publishers in the same year. Bishop Augoustinos dedicated both books to his listeners and readers and Father Gerostergios has dedicated his translation of both works to all the clergy, Sunday School teachers and all the faithful of the English-speaking Orthodox Church in the Diaspora for their edification. Both books originated in sermons delivered by His Grace to his diocese and both follow the same pattern, beginning with the first Sunday of the calendar year and ending with the Sunday after Christmas (in the case of the Gospel Readings) and the Sunday before the Epiphany (in the case of the Readings from the Apostles). Though there are a few unidiomatic expressions in the translated texts, for the most part, Father Gerostergios has given us excellent translations into crystal clear English in both volumes.

Both *Drops from the Living Water* and *Sparks from the Apostles* will provide inspirational commentary on the Gospel and Apostolic readings for each Sunday of the year and could well be read individually before or after each Sunday Liturgy. The messages they deliver are clear and to the point. They are not theological treatises but sermons that try to appeal to contemporary issues that are at the center of modern life in Christocentric terms. They are modest but pointed efforts to relate the Gospels and Apostolic Readings to the lives of contemporary men and women. Bishop Augoustinos sees man and woman as "exceptional creations of God, with the abilities and gifts to fulfill the high mission given to them by God" (*Drops from the Living Water*, p. 59) and he emphasizes that the greatest teaching of Christ was love:

Christ taught love. He taught that we should love God, the Heavenly Father. He taught that we should love our parents. He taught that we should love other people like brothers. He taught that we should love even those who are our enemies and pray for them (*Sparks from the Apostles*, p. 59).

Bishop Augoustinos seeks to promote a positive, active, and fulfilling

practice of Christianity in the life of the individual and the community through his preaching of the Word.

Drops from the Living Water and *Sparks from the Apostles* can serve to fill a need both for meditation but also as a guide for applied Christianity.

John E. Rexine
Colgate University

Voices in the Wilderness: An Anthology of Patristic Prayers. By Nikolaos S. Hatzinikolaou. Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1988, Pp. 288.

One of the essential activities of the Christian life is prayer. For Orthodox Christians, prayer is often viewed within the context of the liturgical or communal life of the Church. However, with the publication of such works as *The Way of a Pilgrim* and the *Philokalia*, as well as numerous prayer books containing the daily cycle of Orthodox prayers, the Orthodox Church's rich tradition of private and interior prayer has been made available to the pious believer. To this growing wealth of resources one must now add Fr. Nikolaos Hatzinikolaou's book *Voices in the Wilderness: An Anthology of Patristic Prayers* (288 pages. Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1988).

Voices in the Wilderness is a collection of seventy-four prayers, of varying length, taken from twenty-five Orthodox saints. The lives of these authors cover a period of some seventy-hundred years of the Orthodox Christian tradition. With care and thoughtfulness Fr. Nikolaos has selected and translated prayers from such well-known Saints as Saint John Chrysostom and Saint Basil the Great as well as prayers from two recent Orthodox Saints: Saint Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain and Saint Nektarios. The prayers are replete with biblical quotations which are referenced in the right margin and are accompanied by a complete index of biblical passages appearing in the back of the book.

Each group of prayers attributed to a given Saint is prefaced by a short biographical note about the Saint. On the preceding page is a photographic reproduction of the icon of the Saint below which appears a translation of the Saint's Dismissal Hymn (Apolytikion). The book appears in both hardcover and paperback. The cover of the paperback edition was designed by a friend and classmate of Fr.

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“Εἰκὼν” and “Ἐκκλησία” in the Apocalypse

PETROS VASILIADIS

IN ALL RELIGIONS EXCEPT CHRISTIANITY THE CONCEPT OF deity is abstract; God is the Great Unknown, whom no one has ever seen face to face. He cannot, therefore, be classified with existing things, because he is above existence itself. Christianity, on the other hand, believes that God revealed himself to the world through Christ, the means of revelation being Christ's incarnation, namely, the act of his taking flesh. Christ is, therefore, the actual door through which man enters into the knowledge of God (“ὁ ἑώρακώς ἐμέ ἑώρακε τὸν πατέρα” Jn 14.9); he is the authentic “image” of the Father (“εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου” Col 1.15) as it is perfectly demonstrated by the Greek letters “ὁ ὦν” in the Orthodox icons of Christ. In the Christian East the icon of Christ is an icon of God. By seeing the image we are made aware of what is revealed.¹

This biblical foundation of the Christian theology of “images” has, in fact, provided the basis for the important definition of the veneration of icons and, in general, of the Christian cult of images

¹Philip Sherrard, “The Art of the Icon-Sacrament and Image,” in A. A. Allchin, ed., *Essays Published for the Fellowship of Saint Alban and Saint Sergius* (London, 1967).

adopted by the Seventh Ecumenical Council in 787 which we celebrate today 1200 years later, and to which this pan-Orthodox theological conference is dedicated. The incarnational and, in fact, christological basis of the Christian theology of images is inescapable. After all, the theological issue of the Iconoclastic controversy, which was fundamentally concerned with the icon of Christ, far from being exclusively a dispute about the veneration of icons, was in fact, an issue of great christological importance with regard to the implication of a confession of faith in the divinity of Christ and his incarnation.² It was the doctrine of the Incarnation that gave rise to a new relationship between man and God. God resembles man by virtue of his taking flesh; as man was created in the image and likeness of God. Such was the theological basis of the fundamental Orthodox teaching of *theosis*. When Saint Athanasios the Great first expressed the notion of deification, far from implying disregard for the body or for matter, he referred mainly to the body's redemption and the restoration of the glory which the whole of creation possessed before the Fall. This true glory is what was revealed during the transfiguration of Christ on Mount Tabor. Icons in Byzantine art never express a dematerialization of the bodies of holy figures, as was wrongly believed in the past. What they actually express is the reverse process, the transfiguration of the material body. In fact, it is not only the figures which are treated in Byzantine icons with this transfiguring technique, but nature too. The material or cosmic elements which surround the holy figures are also shown transformed and flooded by grace. The icon reveals how matter, in fact the whole of creation, man and nature alike can be transformed to the original harmony and beauty which they possessed before the Fall; for it is not just humankind but the cosmos in its entirety that participate in God's redemption in Christ (Rom 8.20ff).

The icon, therefore, is an *image* or reflection of the Incarnation and the Transfiguration.³ However, the most profound message which the theology of icons conveys to us, as we approach the twenty-first century, is that of the eschatological perspective. Icons, though depicting worldly schemes, are not, in fact, concerned with the actual world; they foreshadow the coming of the Kingdom of God "on earth as it is in heaven." In Orthodox icons the same interaction of past, present and future occurs as in the Eucharist. Like the Eucharist, the same anticipation by this world of the world to come is present;

² See H. Alivizatos, *Hoi hieroi kanones* (Athens, 1949) pp. 118f.; also John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology, Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes* (New York, 1974) pp. 46ff, 158.

³ John Stuart, *The Ikons* (London, 1975) p. 33.

just as the same concept of penetration of matter by the spirit (and vice-versa) is constantly re-enacted in the heart of the Christian Liturgy.⁴

There is no document in holy Scripture other than the Book of Revelation or Apocalypse,⁵ the last book of the New Testament, which resembles, so closely in this eschatological perspective, these two characteristic features of Orthodoxy: the icon and the Eucharist. The Apocalypse, like the icons and the Eucharist, looks back to the Incarnation, which culminated in the death of Jesus, and forward to the messianic banquet in the kingdom of God. As the icon foreshadows the coming of the kingdom of God and the Eucharist is a continuous celebration of it, so the Apocalypse is the dramatic portrayal of the coming of that kingdom. What the icon does in painting and the Eucharist in deed the Apocalypse does in word. Images in written quasi-poetical form are the prominent features of the Apocalypse; images also dominate not only in the painting of an icon, but in the eucharistic re-enactment of the coming of the kingdom; for the celebrant of the Eucharist, whether bishop or priest, is the image or type of Christ in his eschatological coming. Thus, almost all kinds of art (poetry, theater and painting) are used in Orthodox life to orient one towards the coming of the kingdom of God. And something equally important: the strange and mysterious phenomena we meet in the Apocalypse are, in fact, the author's peculiar way of expressing his divine message. The prophet John, like the rest of contemporary apocalyptic writers, instead of writing an essay, "painted" a picture.

The purpose of this communication is not, of course, to draw the attention only to resemblances between Orthodox icons and the Apocalypse, nor is it to underline the profound message which they both convey to twenty-first century Orthodoxy. Its scope is very limited: it concerns its ecclesiology, namely the understanding of both the nature and structure of the Church in the last book of the New Testament. Not because this subject has received increasing attention in recent years, due to ecumenical discussions which have been both a cause and product of the ecumenical movement. After all, there are quite a number of prominent theologians who insist that ancient ecclesiologies, even those recorded in the New Testament, cannot

⁴ For further reading on the theology of icons see D. Tselegidis, *He Theologia tes eikonas kai he anthropologike semasia tes* (Thessalonike, 1984); L. Ouspensky, *Theologie de l' Icône dans l' Eglise Orthodoxe* (Paris, 1980); G. Ostrogorsky, *Studien zur Geschichte des byzantinischen Bilderstreites* (Amsterdam, 1964).

⁵ Throughout this article I use the word "Apocalypse" to denote the last book of the Bible, preserving the term "revelation" only for the divine act of the Holy Spirit.

and/or should not be normative for our churches today; they can only be "descriptive and nothing more, and the description should be rigorously separated from interpretation and application."⁶ Some others go much further and with extremely sound argumentation contend that the oneness of the Church "cannot be approached on a purely historical level," but can "only be laid hold of by faith," as an "eschatological datum."⁷ In addition, as the late Professor G. Florovsky said, "there is no formal definition of the Church which could claim any doctrinal authority. None can be found in the Fathers . . . or even in Thomas Aquinas."⁸ Moreover, even in the New Testament field there can hardly be a unity in ecclesiology,⁹ since even in Pauline thought, the most systematic of all, "ecclesiology is fundamentally nothing other than a Christology."¹⁰

The purpose of choosing to examine the concept of Church through the images of the Apocalypse is that the last book of the New Testament provides the missing part in the puzzle of the development of early Christian ecclesiology. It convincingly explains, I believe, how the puzzling so-called "transition" from the biblical i.e., New Testament understanding of the Church to the Ignatian conception of a eucharistic community, centered in the ecclesiastical office of the bishop, took place. Conversely, it also provides the profound meaning and correct connotation, as well as the biblical basis for the epoch-

⁶ Thus, almost all kinds of art (poetry, theater, and painting) are used in Orthodox life to orient towards the coming of the kingdom of God. There is something equally important: the strange and mysterious phenomena we meet in the Apocalypse are in fact the author's peculiar way of expressing his divine message. The prophet John, like other contemporary apocalyptic writers, "painted" a picture instead of writing an essay.

⁷ P. S. Minear, "Ontology and Ecclesiology in the Apocalypse," *New Testament Studies*, 13 (1965) 89, p. 90. See also J. Zizioulas' comment regarding a similar situation: "We must not venerate history in a conservativistic manner. So what the first three centuries did is not obligatory for the church today." Zizioulas, "Episkope and Episkopos in the Early Church. A Brief survey of the Evidence," in *Episkope and the Episcopate in Ecumenical Perspective*, Faith and Order Paper 102 (Geneva, 1980) p. 41.

⁸ E. Käsemann, "Unity and Diversity in New Testament Ecclesiology," *New Testament*, 6 (1963) 290; and "Begründet der neutestamentliche Kanon die Einheit der Kirche?" *evT* 11 (1951) 13. G. Florovsky, *The Universal Church in God's Design* p. 43; See also Florovsky, *The Body of the Living Christ* (Thessalonike, 1981), p. 15.

⁹ See E. Käsemann's views (note 8). The diversity, of course, of ecclesiological views in the ancient Church is something which one would expect; as G. Florovsky used to say, the ancient Church was a "living" and not a "static" entity. Florovsky, "The Patterns of Historical Interpretation," *ATR*, 50 (1968) 149. See also Zizioulas' views, "Episkope and episkopos," p. 41.

¹⁰ E. Percy, *Der Leib Christi* (Lund, 1942), p. 45.

making contribution of Saint Ignatios of Antioch.

I would like, at this point, to make a short digression. I do not appeal to the Bible in order to provide scriptural foundation to a later ecclesiastical practice. I hold steadily to the Byzantine hermeneutical principle of *theoptia* and to the understanding of divine revelation which this principle implies. According to this principle, which I have elsewhere shown to date back to the Bible itself, divine revelation was not exhausted by either Scripture, tradition, or even both. As J. Meyendorff has argued,¹¹ the concept of *theologia* which developed in Cappadocian and Antiochean thought was inseparable from *theoria* (i.e., contemplation). Therefore, it could not be, as accepted in scholastic thinking, a rational deduction from "revealed" premises, such as from Scripture or statements of an ecclesiastical magisterium. Rather, it was a vision experienced by all members of the Church, the saints in particular, whose authenticity was, of course, to be checked against the witness of Scripture and tradition. Defining, therefore, divine revelation as living truth, accessible to the human experience of God's presence in his Church, without the absolute limitations of certain scriptural documents or even of conciliar definitions, Orthodoxy has a unique challenge to discover while expressing her self-understanding as she faces the twenty-first century.

Modern New Testament scholarship has surrendered the view that second century church offices and institutions were a *creatio ex nihilo*. However, New Testament scholars still, almost unanimously, insist that, "it would be extremely dangerous to assume that the second century situations already existed in the first century."¹² Although we meet in the pastoral epistles and only there, Timothy and Titos with the assignment to establish local communities, it is the notion of ἐπισκοπή (supervision), rather than ἐπίσκοπος, that is dealt with in the Bible; the ministries of ἐπίσκοπος and πρεσβύτερος being more or less interchangeable. Bishop Zizioulas has convincingly shown that only in the second century was the content and function of ἐπισκοπή clearly defined.¹³ It was with the Apostolic Fathers that the ministry of the ἐπίσκοπος acquired "its own specific content in relation to other ministries; particularly that of the presbyters, and became central to the whole structure of the Church."¹⁴ Nevertheless, Saint Ignatios

¹¹Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, p. 8ff.

¹²R. E. Brown, "A Brief Survey of the New Testament Evidence on 'Episkope and Episkopos,'" *Episkope and Episcopate*, p. 15.

¹³Zizioulas, "Episkope and episkopos" p. 30; see also Zizioulas, *He enotes tes ekklesias en te theia eucharistia kai to episkopo kata tous treis protous aionas* (Athens, 1965).

¹⁴Zizioulas, "Episkope and episkopos" p. 30.

never thought of a "monarchical episcopacy," as it was wrongly believed in the past.¹⁵ His view of the Church was purely eschatological; the local community was regarded as an "image" of the heavenly structure of the world in which God reigns. Consequently, the bishop's ministry, instead of being historically transmitted,¹⁶ is iconically portrayed in the eschatological community of the Eucharist. Because the Church was understood as portraying the kingdom of God on Earth, Ignatios' singling out of only *one* person in the community would assume the ministry of ἐπίσκοπή, and who would exercise final authority, prevailed in the second century without provoking any negative reactions anywhere. In the local eucharistic gathering, the ἐπίσκοπος was the image (τύπος) of Christ surrounded by the πρεσβύτεροι representing the apostles sitting on their eschatological thrones (cf. Mt 19.28; Lk 22.30).¹⁷

Let us now turn to the Apocalypse, this most neglected book of the Bible both in terms of ecclesiastical every day life (cf. its absence from the lectionaries of the Orthodox Liturgy) and scholarly research, as far as the quest of early Christian ecclesiology is concerned.¹⁸ The former was certainly due to the providence of the Church to prevent the adoption by the Orthodox Christian community of incorrect chiliastic views. The latter was determined by the preoccupation of the world and not its contribution to Christian ecclesiology.¹⁹ Throughout the history of Christian literature, especially in the ancient Church, the crucial issue of the book of the Apocalypse has been whether to interpret it literally or spiritually.²⁰ Although up to the

¹⁵H. Lietzmann, *Geschichte der alten Kirche*, Vol. 1 (Berlin, 1961), p. 264. This is also the view of A. Satake, *Die Gemeindeordnung in der Johannesapokalypse* (Neukirchen, 1966) pp. 8ff, 17, 194.

¹⁶As Zizioulas has rightly argued, Ignatios does not share the linear historical view of Clement of Rome, according to which ministry was transmitted from God through Christ to the apostles and finally to bishops and deacons (Clement's First Epistle to the Corinthians 42.1). Instead, he holds a more eschatological view of the Church as a "eucharistic community" (note 13 above). See also R. E. Brown, who considers Clement's theology analysis as an oversimplification. Brown, "A Brief Survey," p. 29.

¹⁷Zizioulas, "Episkope and episkopos" p. 30.

¹⁸Although the literature on the Apocalypse is vast, especially in recent years, its ecclesiology attracts only marginal attention.

¹⁹To my knowledge, the most important contributions to the subject are those by A. T. Nikolainen, "Der Kerchenbegriff in der Offenbarung des Johannes," *New Testament Studies*, 9 (1962) 351; Satake, *Die Gemeindeordnung*; Minear, "Ontology and Ecclesiology"; and C. Wolff, "Die Gemeinde des Christus in der Apokalypse des Johannes," *New Testament Studies*, 27 (1981) 186. See also R. Schnackenburg, *Die Kirche im Neuen Testament* (Freiburg, 1961) pp. 93ff.

²⁰See A. Y. Collins, "Reading of Revelation in the Twentieth Century," *Interpretation*, 40 (1968) 229.

time of Origen ecclesiastical writers of the second century were unanimously inclined to interpret it literally, taking the controversial passage (20.1-6) as predicting an earthly kingdom of Christ which would follow his Second Coming and last a thousand years,²¹ under the influence of the great Alexandrian thinker, the historical understanding of the Apocalypse gave its place to the spiritual and allegorical one.²² Origen rejected the literal interpretation of prophecies of the end times arguing that they ought to be interpreted figuratively on the basis that hope for an earthly kingdom was an indulgence of desires and lusts!²³ When Saint Augustine transferred these views to the West, though he attempted an "eschatological synthesis," a compromise between the chiliastic and allegorical view,²⁴ the spiritual understanding of the Apocalypse became dominant and the notion of an earthly reign of Christ or of a new age remained dormant, until recently, with very few exceptions both in the West²⁵ and East.²⁶ The symbols and images of the Apocalypse were thus predominantly understood as metaphysical and ethical characteristics of reality.

The historical and political realities that underlie these symbols and images have only recently, in our age, been rediscovered. Today biblical scholarship has almost unanimously come to the conclusion that the Apocalypse addresses a concrete historical situation with the prophetic word of God. I need only to remind you of two among the prominent Orthodox scholars: S. Agouridis and the late B. Stoyannos.²⁷

The remarkable world of images into which the seer/prophet invites us, a world of angels and demons, whores and virgins, Christ and Antichrist, can be perfectly explained; in some cases the author himself helps the reader by providing explicit interpretations

²¹See among other Papias, in Eusebios, *Church History*, 3.39; Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho*; Irenaios, *Against Heresy*, 5.30ff; Tertullian, *Ag. Marcion*, 3.25.

²²See B. Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*, 3rd. rev. ed. (London, 1983).

²³Origen, *Peri archon*, 2, 2.2-5.

²⁴Origen, *De Civit. Dei*, 20.7-13.

²⁵See Collins, "Reading the Book of Revelation," pp. 229ff.

²⁶See A. Argyriou, *Les Exegeses greques de l' Apocalypse a l' epoque turque (1453-1821)* (Thessalonike, 1982).

²⁷Among Orthodox biblical scholars are S. Agouridis, *The Apocalypse of John* (Athens, 1978); and the late B. Stoyannos, *Apocalypse* (Thessalonike, 1985). For other Orthodox commentaries see P. Bratsiotis, *The Apocalypse of John the Apostle* (Athens, 1950); Archbishop Averky, *The Apocalypse of St. John: An Orthodox Commentary* (California, 1986).

of several of these images,²⁸ in other cases their meaning is implicit in the text (e.g., 5.6), whereas in most of the rest it can be guessed either by their context or first century mythology.²⁹ In addition, there can be no doubt, nowadays, that the prophet John wrote his Apocalypse in order to give courage and comfort to the Christians of Asia Minor in a time of trouble, whether that trouble was well underway, just beginning or only in prospect. However, his words have permanent value, especially for our society, as we approach the twenty-first century. The author of that magnificent book explains, right from the beginning, his purpose: “γράφον οὖν ἃ εἶδες καὶ εἰσὶν καὶ ἃ μέλλει γενέσθαι (1.19). John is the vehicle through which God reveals the present with categories from the past, but in the perspective of the future.³⁰ To put it another way: the book of the Apocalypse is a prophetic response to the perennial ontological question, which in the case of the Apocalypse is a threefold question: the question of God (who, if anyone, rules the world?), the question of history (what, if any, is the meaning of the tragic events which comprise our history?), and the question of ecclesiology, for in a story filled with images it helps the people of God to discover who they are and what they are to do.³¹

Twenty five years ago A. T. Nikolainen dealt, in a very interesting article, with the problem of the ecclesiology of the Apocalypse. He pointed to the centrality of the ecclesiological problem throughout the whole book, and came, among others, to the conclusion that the understanding of the Church in the last book of the Bible appears to be in agreement with the rest of the New Testament writings, especially the Pauline epistles.³² This fair conclusion, although not fully accepted by all,³³ is, however, a good starting point to unravel the ecclesiological mystery of the Apocalypse, a book written at nearly the end of the process of the composition of the New Testament writings. It is, therefore, necessary to look briefly back to the early Church's ecclesiological self-understanding, starting with the first two

²⁸See Collins, “Reading the Book of Revelation.”

²⁹D. L. Barr, “The Apocalypse as a Symbolic Transformation of the World: A Literary Analysis,” *Interpretation*, 40 (1986) 39, p. 40.

³⁰See also J. P. M. Sweet, *Revelation* (Philadelphia, 1979); E. Schüssler-Fiorenza, “Composition and Structure of the Book of Revelation,” *Catholic Bible Quarterly*, 39 (1977) 344.

³¹Stoyannos, *Apocalypse* p. 18.

³²Nikolainen, “Der Kerchenbegriff,” p. 361.

³³See Agouridis, *The Apocalypse of John*, p. 63; also Collins, “Reading the Book of Revelation,” p. 242; M. E. Boring, “The Theology of Revelation,” *Interpretation*, 40 (1986) 257.

decades following Pentecost.

During this constructive period the early Christian community understood her existence as the genuine expression of the people of God. With a series of terms taken from the Old Testament the early Christians believed that they were "the Israel of God" (Gal 6.16), the "saints" (Acts 9.32-41; 26.10; Rom 1.7; 8.27; 12.13; 15.25), "the elect" (Rom 8.33; Col 3.12 etc.), "the chosen race" (1 Pt 2.9), "the royal priesthood" (ibid.), namely, the holy people of God to whom all the promises of the Bible were to be fulfilled at the "eschaton."

The early Church was convinced that God's promises in which the Book of Exodus referred to Israel (19.6; 3.12ff), applied to herself. Conceptually, therefore, the early Church inclined to think of herself as a "people" and not as an organization. An examination of both the Old and New Testament terminology makes this quite clear. The chosen people of God were an 'am (Hebrew, especially in the prophets) or a λαός (Greek), whereas the people of the outside world were designated by the Hebrew term *goi* and the Greek ἔθνη (cf. Acts 15.14, "Ὁ Θεός ἐπεσκέψατο λαβεῖν ἐξ ἐθνῶν λαόν ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ"). Thus, in the consciousness of the newly created community was the belief that God created a people which distinguished the Christian church from the guilds, clubs, and religious societies so typical of Roman times.³⁴ It is quite significant that the first Christian community used the term Ἐκκλησία in its Old Testament meaning. It is not accidental that the term *ecclesia* in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, corresponds to the Hebrew *qahal*, a term denoting the congregation of God's people. The Septuagint never translates the Hebrew 'edah' Ἐκκλησία, the usual translation of which is συναγωγή.³⁵ In this primitive period, therefore, the members of the Christian community do not just belong to the Church; they are not simply members of an organization; *they* are the Church.³⁶

The second generation following Pentecost is certainly characterized by the great theological contribution of Saint Paul. The Apostle takes over the charismatic notion of the Church noted above, but gave it, in addition, a universal and ecumenical character. In the Church belong all human beings, Jews and Gentiles, for the latter have been joined to the same tree of the people of God (Rom 11. 13ff). The Church, thus, as the new Israel, is no longer constituted

³⁴For example, Satake, *Die Gemeindeordnung*, p. 194f.

³⁵G. E. Wright and others, *The Biblical Doctrine of Man in Society* (London, 1954), p. 79.

³⁶See W. Schrage, "Ekklesia und Synagoge. Zum Ursprung des Urchristlichen Kirchenbegriffs," 60 (1963) 178.

on grounds of external criteria (circumstances, etc.), but on her faith in Jesus Christ ("οὐ γὰρ πάντες οἱ ἐξ Ἰσραὴλ, οὗτοι Ἰσραὴλ" Rom 9.6).

The term, however, with which Saint Paul recalls the charismatic understanding of the Church is σῶμα Χριστοῦ (body of Christ).³⁷ With this metaphorical expression he was able to express the charismatic nature of the Church by means of the Semitic concept of corporate personality. He emphasized that, in the Church, there exists a variety of *charismata*, exercised by the individual members of the community, which are necessary for the οἰκοδομή and nutrition of the body, whose only head is Christ. The consequence of this understanding of the Church was Saint Paul's vigorous defense of, and insistence upon, the superiority of his apostolic ministry (cf. 1 Cor 12.28ff) above any other authority. It is of the utmost importance that at this decisive period of formation of Christian theology this great figure of Christianity was completely convinced, and strongly emphasized, that he was "ἀπόστολος οὐκ ἀπ' ἀνθρώπων οὐδέ δι' ἀνθρώπου, ἀλλὰ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ Θεοῦ πατρός" (Gal 1.1), thus questioning the exclusive authority of any leading group, either from the Twelve or generally from the circle of the Jerusalem community.

The Johannine metaphor of the vine (Jn 15.1-8) is equally impressive.³⁸ As with the Pauline term *soma*, the double scheme ἄμπελος — κλήματα indicates the special relationship existing between the people and Christ, thereby revealing the inner basis of ecclesiastical life. Christ is the vine, the individuals of the community are the branches, and God is the vine-dresser. The branches bear fruit, but they are able to do so only because they remain in the vine. The worthless branches are cut away and burned, whereas the rest are pruned in order that they may bear more fruit. The only criterion of belonging to the Church is to bear much fruit, and this is the way that God the Father is glorified (v. 8).

Other New Testament metaphors for the Church, "household of faith" (Eph 2.11ff), "fellowship" (1 Cor 1.9 etc.), "new covenant" (2 Cor 3.6 etc.), "bride of Christ" (Eph 5.31f; Rev 21.9), "little flock" (Lk 12.32 etc.), "family of Christ" (cf. ἀδελφοί), all point to the same conception: namely, that the new community is a people, bound together by the spirit provided by God in Christ and not by external structures of organization.

It is true, of course, that later, certainly within the period of the composition of the New Testament writings, this charismatic com-

³⁷K. Stendahl, "Kirche und Urchristentum," vol. 3, 1297ff.

³⁸See E. Best, *One Body in Christ. A Study in the Relationship of the Church to Christ in the Epistles of the Apostle Paul* (London, 1955); also Florovsky, *The Body of the Living Christ*, pp. 33ff.

munity acquired some kind of structure with certain offices and developed some sort of ecclesiastical authority, the bearers of which were charged with preserving the apostolic heritage and distinguishing between the correct (in the pastoral epistles it is called ὑγιαίνουσα) and false teaching. One can also argue that the Church, even from the very beginning, has never lived without "order." However, she never deviated to institutionalism, nor lost her prophetic and charismatic character or her consciousness of being a people.³⁹

This is the background of the prophet John's understanding of the essential nature of the Church. In what follows, I shall, very briefly, underline some of the characteristic features of the Apocalypse, which confirm my earlier statement that in this book we have the intermediate stage in the transition from biblical to Ignatian ecclesiology.

(a) In the inaugural vision (1.9-20), but mainly in the seven letters addressed to the seven churches (chs. 2-3), the non-additive character of the Church is emphasized. The author of the Apocalypse understands each one of the seven churches as "catholic," a full Church. Each local church is not just a section of the entire church, but expresses the fullness of the Church, as exemplified by the authority given in the concluding promises at the end of each letter. This notion was already present in the Pauline epistles in an implicit form, but here, in the Apocalypse it shows up more clearly through use of the term ἐκκλησία in the singular. The prophet John saw seven separate lampstands (λαμπάδες), which represent the church of Christ. In the Old Testament one seven-branched lampstand (ἐπτάφωτος λαμπάδα) is the symbolic representation of the people of God. For the author of the Apocalypse this symbol cannot apply to the new people of God, because each local community alone represents the *ecclesia* of Christ; that is why the symbol of the one seven-branched lampstand was transformed to seven separate lampstands. It is noteworthy that even when the authority given by Christ is removed from a local church because of improper conduct (cf. 2.5), the Church does not lose her power, for Christ "abides in the middle of the lampstands" (1.13).⁴⁰

(b) The nature of the Church according to the Apocalypse has a double substance. As the entire apocalyptic drama is performed on two levels, the earthly and the heavenly, so the nature of the Church

³⁹More in P. S. Minear, *Images of the Church in the New Testament* (Philadelphia, 1960).

⁴⁰P. Vassiliadis, "The Church as a Charismatic Institution (Commentary on 1 Cor. 12.27)," *Gregory Palamas*, 70 (1087) 195, p. 198. See also Wright and others, *The Biblical Doctrine*, pp. 80ff.

is presented as having both an earthly and heavenly aspect, historical, and super-historical. The Church is both human and divine in character. She takes the form of both seven earthly communities, with all their problems and their shortcomings (ch. 2-3), but at a later stage is presented as a holy city, "the New Jerusalem," the "bride of Christ" (21.1ff). This interchange of the Church's heavenly and earthly existence is an essential feature throughout the whole book. The local churches are represented by angels, thus making the earthly communities angelic ones. These angels, furthermore, participate in the heavenly liturgy (8.1ff). The term ἄγγελος is deliberately chosen by the author; whether it refers to bishop, priest, or angel, it is beyond question that, in the Apocalypse, it is interchangeable with the term ἐκκλησία. Throughout the book Christ refers to the Christian community as speaking to angels. In the Old Testament the priesthood is frequently identified with that of angels (cf. the confirmation by the ἄγγελος that "σύνδουλός σου εἰμι καὶ τῶν ἀδελφῶν σου τῶν προφητῶν" 22.8f), since the whole community is identified with the priesthood (1.6; 5.10), it is more than clear that the perspective of the ecclesiastical structure in the Apocalypse is not hieratical but eschatological.⁴¹

(c) It is beyond any doubt that the liturgical element penetrates deeply the entire story of the Apocalypse, both in form and substance. It is not only that the opening (1.3-4) and closing (22.6ff) sections betray a liturgical setting: not even that the experience of the seven takes place on "the Lord's day" (1.10), nor that he uses extensive liturgical material (1.5-6), not to mention, of course, the numerous hymns of the Apocalypse, whether they contain traditional material or were the result of the creative mind and inspiration of Saint John. Eucharistic elements also appear both explicitly (2.7 cf. 2.14; 2.17; 3.20; 7.16f; 11.17; 19.9ff; 21.6; 22.1-10ff), not to mention, of course, the worship scene in ch. 4), and implicitly (5.9; 7.2-14; 12.11; 14.10ff; 16.6-19; 17.2). We are not going as far as to propose that the Apocalypse functioned within the context of the early Christian liturgy, culminating in the Eucharist.⁴² However, what is quite inescapable, is that the Church, as the true expression of the kingdom of God, is fully realized within the liturgical and eucharistic context. The liturgy is the manifestation of God's rule (cf. e.g., the frequent address to both God and Christ as παντοκράτωρ 1.8; 4.8; 11.17; 15.3; 16.7-14; 19.6-15; 21.22). Hence, the struggle between the worship of God and worship of the beast; for the Church to worship God is to

⁴¹Nikolainen, "Der Kerchenbegriff," p. 352.

⁴²Ibid. p. 353.

experience his kingdom, whereas to worship the beast is to fight against, and therefore, reject that kingdom.

(d) This "catholic," "eschatological," and "liturgical" understanding, by the author of the Apocalypse, of the Church which was very briefly described above, is nowhere confirmed better than in chs. 4 and 5, the scene of the heavenly worship of the Lamb (ἀρνίον). P. T. Achtemeier, one of the leading New Testament scholars of our time, believes that the climax of the Apocalypse is to be found in this scene. Another climax, the scene of "the new heaven and new earth" (21.1ff), is in fact, just the completion of what the seer announces here.⁴³ But the most significant fact for our subject is the participation in this divine liturgy of twenty-four presbyters sitting on twenty-four thrones. The clue for their identification is to be found in the second climax (21,12-14) where it becomes quite evident that they represent the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel and the twelve apostles, the former Israel and the later Israel, God's people in their entirety surrounding Christ standing in the center of the throne (5.6). The old apocalyptic picture of the eschatological judgment (Mt 19.28; Lk 22.30; cf. 1 Cor 6.2) has now been transformed to a worshipping eschatological gathering.

If the above argument is at all sound, then we can reasonably argue that the ecclesiological picture of the Apocalypse is but one step short of the Ignatian concept.⁴⁴ In both, it is the eschatological, and not hieratical, nature of the Church that was stressed; in both, the primary concern was always to maintain clearly the vision of the kingdom of God before the eyes of the Christian community.⁴⁵ The only point, perhaps, where the Apocalypse is more pronounced is in its political overtones, which resulted from its soteriology. True to its prophetic and apocalyptic character, it remained strongly committed to the historical process. Yet, unlike its apocalyptic pre-

⁴³D. L. Barr, "The Apocalypse of John as Oral Enactment," *Interpretation*, 40 (1986) 243, p. 253. See also L. Thompson, "Cult and Eschatology in the Apocalypse of John," *JR*, 4 (1969) 330, who believes that in the Apocalypse, the Kingdom of God is realized in the liturgical material "prior to the realization of these realities in the dramatic narrative form," (p. 342).

⁴⁴P. J. Achtemeier, "Revelation 5, 1-14," *Interpretation*, 40 (1986) 283, p. 283.

⁴⁵Satake, *Die Gemeindeordnung*, p. 194, has failed at this crucial point, when he concludes his very important dissertation with these words: "Auch in Kleinasiatischem Raum findet man keine Parallele zu der Gemeinde der Apokalypse. Ignatius z.B. der u.a. Briefe an drei Gemeinden schreibt, die auch in der Apokalypse eine Rolle spielen setzt sogar ohne weiteres voraus, das jede Gemeinde einen Bischof hat. Diese Umstände weisen darauf hin, das es sich bei der Gemeinde der Apokalypse um ein besonderes judenchristliches Konventikel handelt, dessen Tradition auf der frühesten Zeit der palastinischen Urgemeinde zurückgeht."

decessors, it does not envisage the cosmic transformation at the once-for-all event of the "eschaton," but rather, in the specific historical event of the overthrowing of contemporary faithlessness and injustice. Only when Satan in his concrete expression, in the Roman Empire, no longer rules on earth, giving way to the reign of the Lamb, is salvation accomplished. This is evident not only in the contrast between the "throne" of the Lamb (5.6ff) on the other hand, and the throne of Satan (2.13), a reference to emperor worship, but also the throne of the beast (13.2) and the throne of the dragon (16.10) on the other. Nor is it an identification of the Roman Empire with Babylon, the symbol of political oppression, tyranny and godlessness for ancient Israel, that points to this direction. It is mainly the prophet's assertion that God has created his church in terms of "kingdom and priesthood" ("βασιλείαν καὶ ἱερεῖς" 5.10 cf. 1.6). E. Schussler Fiorenza, in an excellent article, has convincingly shown that the author of the Apocalypse believes that redemption cannot be limited to the spiritual life, as the Gnostics attempted to do, (an example being the Gospel of Thomas 18). Rather it involves liberation from bondage, slavery, and injustice, thus giving dignity to those who have been saved through the death of Christ.⁴⁶ It was for this reason that in the "new song" (Rev 5.9-10) he carefully reworked the traditional baptismal formula (Rev 1.5-6) by using sociopolitical categories. He insists that the baptized (who by the blood of Christ have been freed from their sins, installed to kingship, and made priests for God) will definitely reign on earth (καὶ βασιλεύσουσιν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς 5.10). This is not merely naive milleniarism, but an affirmation of the Church's eschatological perspective and an attempt to prevent the Christian understanding of salvation to become just an illusion.⁴⁷ What is essential in the Apocalypse is not solely the expectation of the salvation of the world, but its completion with final elimination of evil.⁴⁸

At the dawn of the second half of the twentieth century, just after the disastrous Second World War, G. Florovsky underlined the fundamental importance of liturgy for Christian theology. "Christianity," he said, "is a liturgical religion. The Church is, first of all, a worshiping community. Worship comes first, doctrine and discipline second."⁴⁹ With these words he marked the road which Orthodox

⁴⁶E. Schussler Fiorenza, "Redemption as Liberation: Apocalypse 1, 5f and 5, 9f," *Catholic Bible Quarterly*, 36 (1974) 220, p. 231.

⁴⁷Fiorenza, "Redemption as Liberation," p. 221.

⁴⁸Wolff, "Die Gemeinde des Christus," pp. 196f.

⁴⁹G. Florovsky, "The Elements of Liturgy," in C. Patelos, ed., *The Orthodox Church in the Ecumenical Movement* (Geneva, 1978) pp. 178-82.

theology should take during the last part of the twentieth century. Now, as we approach the end of this turbulent century, the profound meaning of John's Apocalypse and of Orthodox icons is offered as a perfect landmark to our theology, a means by which to renew the eschatological vision of the Church and to face the sociohistorical realities of our day. It is not at all an exaggeration for us to state that our society has many similarities with the society for which Saint John wrote his prophecies.

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Essays on Orthodox Christian-Jewish Relations. By George C. Papademetriou. Preface by Bishop Methodios of Boston. Bristol, Indiana: Wyndham Hall Press, 1990. Pp. 133. \$14.95, soft.

The Rev. Dr. George C. Papademetriou, Director of the Library and Associate Professor of Theology at the Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Theological School, has written a number of papers and reviews on the subject of the relations between Orthodox Christians and Jews that have been published in various journals, especially *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* and *The Journal of Ecumenical Studies*. These, together with a number of reviews and bibliographical items, have now been collected in a single, convenient volume.

Essays on Orthodox Christian-Jewish Relations contains four sections: (1) "Studies on Orthodox Christian and Jewish Relations"; (2) "Reviews of Books on Judaism and Christianity"; (3) Brief Abstracts of Articles on Orthodox Christians and Jews" ("Judaism and Greek Orthodoxy"; "Christianity and the Social Problem"; "Israel and the State of Israel"); and (4) "An Annotated Bibliography on Orthodox Christians and Jews" — all preceded by a general introduction with an overview of Orthodox Christian-Jewish Relations. Father Papademetriou has chosen to focus on three topics: (1) anti-Semitism as a sin against God; (2) the incompatibility for the Christian faith of coercive proselytism or forced baptism directly upon the Jews; and (3) the reality today of the covenant God made with the Jewish people at Sinai. The Orthodox Church condemns all racist and anti-Jewish violence and calls for the application of justice and love toward all people, believers and non-believers, and categorically rejects coercion as an acceptable means of conversion. The encyclical of the Ecumenical Patriarch Metrophanes III (1520-1580) is cited and reproduced in full with his unequivocal statement that "those Christians who commit those insolent acts against the Jews are excommunicated from God Almighty and are cursed and are unforgiven and remain bound even after death" (p. 88) — an unusually strong admonition for its time and unprecedented in the Europe of his day.

The current dialogue, Father Papademetriou insists, must include those issues that separate as well as the ones that unite Christians and Jews; that this dialogue is determined by two trends in Christianity, namely, "the Christianity which is grounded in the Hebrew Bible and which therefore understands Christianity in the categories of the Jewish thought world of the Bible and the early post Biblical Judaism" and the Christianity "which is grounded in Hellenism and

which consequently understands Christianity in the categories of pagan Hellenism and its neo-Platonic philosophical articulation" (p. 26).

The five chapters of Section One carefully examine (1) the "Jewish Rite in the Christian Church: Ecumenical Possibility"; (2) "Judaism and Greek Orthodoxy in Historical Perspective"; (3) "Orthodox Christian and Jewish Relations"; (4) Jerusalem in the Orthodox Theological Tradition"; and (5) "An Encyclical of the Ecumenical Patriarch Metrophanes III (1520-1580) Condemning Oppression of Jews." All are consistent in emphasizing the positive and rejecting the negative and stress that an attitude of mutual respect and trust must be cultivated and supported by informed knowledge by which people can come to understand each other and engage in an honest and meaningful dialogue with each other. In the nineteenth century Metropolitan Athanasios of Corfu had strongly asserted that "The threats and inhuman acts against the Jews are absolutely incompatible with the faith of Christ, Who commands us to love all human beings" (p. 2).

Essays on Orthodox Christian-Jewish Relations is unique in that it is the first time that a priest of the Greek Orthodox Church, who has himself engaged in interfaith dialogue for the Orthodox Church, speaks out in some detail on topics of convergence and differences between the two traditions in an effort to explore, sensitively and reasonably, ways in which a productive dialogue can be and must be developed. It is, indeed, a pioneering work that could set the stage for a deeper and more far-reaching interfaith dialogue.

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Drops from the Living Water: Orthodox Homilies on the Sunday Gospel Readings. By Augoustinos N. Kantiotes, Bishop of Florina. Translation and Foreword by Asterios Gerostergios. Belmont, MA: Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, 1992. Pp. 216. 52 illustrations. \$17.50, hard.

Sparks from the Apostles: Orthodox Homilies on the Sunday Apostolic Readings. By Augoustinos N. Kantiotes, Bishop of Florina. Translation and Foreword by Asterios Gerostergios. Belmont, MA: Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, 1992. Pp. 220. 30 illustrations. \$17.50, hard. Both volumes \$30.00.

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Eucharist—the Bread of the World The Aesthetics of Iconography

NIKOLAI ZABOLOTSKY

WHAT ARE THE AESTHETICS OF ICONOGRAPHY? RATHER, IS IT NOT better to say, what are the aesthetics of icon veneration? In fact, Roman catacomb frescoes, Byzantine iconography, the Russian iconography of the Novgorodian, Moscow, and other icon-painting schools, the Trinity as painted by Rublev, Palekh-style boxes and panels are all things of beauty; they are aesthetic, as an artist would say. However, in what way does this relate to the religious mind? Things pictured on Palekh boxes are as graceful as an icon image in the same style. However, boxes are boxes. On the other hand, even if painted more crudely in an artistic and aesthetic sense, they are kept in a place of honor, a place where people pray before them, while keeping the prettier boxes for their jewelry.

It would be more natural for an Orthodox person, while speaking of the aesthetics of iconography to mean the veneration of icons, believing aesthetics to be fine, useful, and desirable, yet secondary to the primary purpose of icons in a church.

An Orthodox person adorns icons with flowers, embroidery, gold and silver sheeting with pearls and jewels, mostly artificial, but designed to make a beautiful impression. However, these external effects are unrelated to the beauty of the icons themselves, because their real, spiritual beauty is symbolic.

The following passage from a short story by the Russian author Boris Zaitsev, *Valamo, The Saint Nicholas Skete*, shows well the attitude of an Orthodox believer, the simple monk Father Mili, towards the church and the holy icons in it:

... We were going towards the church, slowly walking up a sloping path. Father Mili, who had seemed somewhat sullen in

the boat, grew more talkative.

"That's a good church I've got here," he was saying as he unlocked the door. "Built right as it should be, quite. That's a merchant who's given the money, Solodovnikov by name. It's good here. Quiet and clean. Look how the icons are! And they did a lot of work, painting on the walls, too. Up in the cupola, there's the Savior, copy of his miraculous image. And down there, it's the Apostle Andrew, the first-called. He's been here on this island y'know with everything as it should be. And of course the Queen of Heaven"

Father Mili was quite at home in the church. For us, the church was strange and empty, but for him it was full of holy and benevolent beings among whom his lonely life went on. His attitude was pious, but down to earth, as if to acquaintances although from a higher world. The Apostle Andrew had been the first to plant the cross on the rocks of Valamo, so he was another Valamite for Father Mili, almost a kin. And the fact this may have taken place almost two thousand years ago was of no importance to him, it was just like yesterday. But the main patron, of course, was Saint Nicholas.

Father Mili led us towards an icon of the Saint and then suddenly swung it open. There was a niche behind the icon, where stood a carved wooden image of Saint Nicholas, painted with colors, as if Roman Catholic, shown in mitre, with a sword in one of his hands and a church in the other.

"Look how he is," Father Mili was saying, "Sword in his hand, y'see. . . 'Cause he's a defender of the Church. . . . A small sword it is, but as a righteous man, he's always ready to do battle for the Holy Church. . . . Yes, that's how he was.

Father Mili nodded his head and was looking at the saint almost in admiration, but very seriously as well. You could quite think he used to know him in person."¹

Church-Mindedness and Pious Splendour

Wherever it is, in a church, at the place of honor in a pious Christian home, in the collection of an icon-gathering art lover, or in a museum, the icon is always ecclesiastical; that is, it reminds us of the relationship with the Church, the *ecclesiasticum*, where the Christian community is present, and where the link between whoever is pictured and the prototype, or else, the union of the earthly and the heavenly Church, is visibly and materially experienced. The fact

¹B. Zaitsev, *Izbrannoe* [Selected Works] (New York, 1973) pp. 242-43.

there are numerous icons in Orthodox churches and that they vary in style, painted as they were at different times, by different iconographers so that they have been eroded by time until the image itself becomes indistinguishable, in no way interfering with the pious sentiment induced by the various and numerous holy pictures, indeed serves to remind us of God and the Church. Thus, any Orthodox church, even without liturgy, would not be 'strange and empty' for a believer. Although limited by its walls, it is infinitely extended beyond by the holy icons, visited at a given moment of time, bearing in the icons the notion of timelessness. The church is, for a believer such as Father Mili referred to above, the true home full of the 'holy and benevolent beings' who lovingly look with the eyes of the images at the heads bowed in prayer and spread warmth to the praying heart. It is among the holy images that the beauty of the Church is felt specifically, interior, spiritual.

In a pious Christian home the icon, even in the simplest crudely painted form, or in an image cut out of a church magazine and carefully put into a frame, introduces the same ecclesiastical spirit into the home and the family.

One can pray before an icon even in a collector's apartment or in a museum. That is what actually happens, for instance, in the Tretyakov Art Gallery, Moscow, before the Vladimir icon of the Mother of God, or in Leningrad in front of the Savior Church at the Griboiedov Canal.

Of course, the interior spiritual beauty of the church cannot but be expressed in the external forms of pious splendor. In other words, aesthetics is present in that which is ecclesiastical. It is present in iconography, in the way icons are placed in a church or home, and in their adornments. However, it should be kept in mind that the notion of beauty is relative. Perhaps what is important is not the feeling of beauty, which is subjective, but the recognition of the intention to create it. And, if the forms of what is beautiful are multiple and vary in the dimensions of time and place, the intention to create beauty has been and is inherent to the best trends in humanity. This must be, and is, the intention of iconography. Experts on iconography examine and evaluate this intention and its manifestation in the icons. They look for, and they find, the beauty of the lines, the colors and everything else that gives pleasure to the aesthetic sense. They are correct, for the intention of creating beauty is typical of icon painting, and there is much of what is beautiful in the icons. But it is not only the beauty that makes an icon to be an icon.

Theology of Icons—Symbolism

It is appropriate to talk and write about the "theology of icons." A holy picture is an icon only if it expresses what is exalted, if it represents the interior spiritual sense, or in other words, creates theology through exterior expression. In this respect, icon painting stands in analogy to the Alexandrian way of theological thinking because it searches for and finds an innermost and exalted meaning, that is, the teaching of the Church. That is why symbolism has dominated over the reality of form in iconography ever since its inception.

The earliest Christian pictures of a fish, a young man with a lamb, and others are symbols having their spiritual prototypes in Holy Scripture. A dove, painted even now in icons, is the symbol of the Holy Spirit. The three angels in Rublev's icon are the symbol of the Holy Trinity. Halos over the saints' heads, angels' wings, streams of light in icon painting and many other things are symbolic of holiness, spirituality, otherworldliness, heavenliness. However, being symbolic in the spiritual and interior sense and thus, concerning holiness and the divine icons, in their material and artistic expression, and the earthly which they portray emphasize the truth of the dual unity of the heavenly and earthly in faith and action; that is to say, they dogmatize and theologize in the spirit of the Chalcedonian doctrine on the "unconfused, unchangeable, indivisible, inseparable" union, thus transferring the teaching on the unity of the divine and human natures in Christ into the experience of life and the prayer of His body, the Church. Thus icons witness to the dogma of the Church, demonstrating it, so to speak, in a visible way.

Icons are symbolic, and that is why there is in them a certain and necessary stylization and generic character. However, it should be noted that the generic character and stylization in no way break loose from reality, including the actual historically witnessed outward appearance of the person pictured. The faces of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Mother of God are somewhat similar in every icon and are always clearly distinct. It is even more so the case in the images of saints. Earlier, we referred to Saint Nicholas of Myra, the miracle worker. His image in icons cannot be confused with that of any other saint. However, what is more remarkable, a sculptured portrayal of the saint done on the basis of the relics reposing at Bari, Italy, is very similar to his traditional image in icons. Iconographic images of Saint Serafim of Sarov are very much like his portrait. The icons of Saint Nicholas, the Enlightener of Japan, have been stylized to match the iconographic mould, but we still see in them the almost realistic portrayal of one of our contemporaries glorified among the

saints. Thus, there is not only symbolism, but also a historical basis and memory in icons.

The Canon

In order to avoid unnecessary arbitrariness in iconography, including an unbounded enthusiasm for the *theoria*, or contemplation of icons, appropriate and correct standards for icon painting exist. An iconographer is free to be creative, but his art must enter into the framework of a canon, consecrated by the Church, a particular style or pattern of iconography. The purpose of this discipline of the Church is to insure that the holy image be pious and that icon painting remain faithful to the continuity, consistency, and constancy of the Orthodox Church. Symbolism and stylization are also permissible in iconography as long as they are not transformed into abstractions which detract from the sense of icon veneration, in which and through which the notions of the holy and heavenly are incarnated in the images and forms of the earthly and human. However, at the same time, the earthly and human art should not overshadow or supplant whatever belongs to faith and piety. This is what the icon painting models or patterns are used for. It is owing to them that the iconographer's free creativity—and it must be free in accordance with the artist's talent and character—becomes an icon consecrated by the Church and venerated by the faithful.

The Piety of the Iconographer

Pious icon painting seems to have been no problem with the Orthodox Church in earlier times, while it often is for the Church at present.

A pious iconographer would pray and fast before and during his work at an icon. This spiritual attitude on the artist's part would undoubtedly be transferred to the image. It seems that this situation still remains if we judge by the icons painted at the iconographic school of Moscow Theological Academy, where the very context of the Trinity—St. Sergios Laura, creates a general atmosphere of piety and where the painters are Christian believers who understand the sense and the significance of pious iconography.

It is inappropriate when icon painting becomes pure workmanship, but this seems to be the present trend because of the increased demand for icons by the faithful as well as increased interest in the icon among the general population as a rare collector's item.

An *icon-dauber* was the traditional name given in Russian to the artists—if one could call them artists—who did hack work on icons. Their workmanship was incapable of producing anything beautiful

even in an everyday sense, to say nothing of a beauty that is spiritually inspired. Sometimes such so-called iconographers would do only the faces, hands, and feet, covering the rest with a coat of paint to be hidden under a metal sheeting and thus, doing only the 'visible' part of the job. There are many such icons both in Russian and in other countries. The Church has fought against this sort of icon painting, but has not always been successful.

However, it should be said that an icon is always an icon for a simple believer, no matter how or by whom it has been painted or otherwise fashioned. With the shortage of icons at present, a holy picture whether photographic or otherwise, cut out of a magazine or something similar, becomes, in the eyes of faith, an icon and is a blessing for the home and family. This is the piety of faith, and this is the piety of Orthodox icon veneration.

National and Cultural Imprint

The time and the place, of course, leave their imprint on the icon. The cultural level of a people, their historical as well as everyday interests, their religious or quasi-religious legends, such as beliefs in the forces of darkness, against which the forces of good struggle triumphantly, all can be seen in the icons, the style in which they are painted, and the additional images accompanying the main theme. This is the human aspect of icon painting and icon veneration, quite legitimate in fact, if the dogmatic sense of the icons is considered, for the icons reunite in themselves the elements of divine and human, eternal and temporal.

In this respect every icon is a relic of history. Yet at the same time, it is a religious, sacred object, worthy of veneration. Thus, whether it is done in Byzantine, Slavic, Ethiopian, Georgian, Chinese, or any other national style, whether it goes back to the early times when style was placed above reality, or belongs to a newer period of the pictorial icon painting standing closer to the reality of that which is pictured, the icon is equally venerated. It can be accepted that different tastes exist which prefer the early to the new or hold that the new icon painting offers more to the eye in the vividness of expression. However, what cannot be accepted is one-sided, subjective, and, therefore, erroneous judgment on whether a sacred image is holy or unholy on the ground of a national or cultural bias—or better to say prejudice.

The aesthetics of iconography, the national taste in the matter, the cultural approach, the history of its development, and in particular, the development of art, all of this should be taken into account. However, nothing of what we have mentioned should diminish

the religious significance of the icons as defined by the holy fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council who, when speaking about icons, meant not only the sacred images of the time, but all icons and holy objects of all times and all Christian peoples.

Religious Painting

A great artist, when inspired by a religious feeling, can produce paintings of great spiritual value. The aesthetics of art in the paintings by great masters absorb and reflect the beauty of man and the world around him in analyzing fine shades of feeling through thought, emotion, and craftsmanship. The religious subject adds to this something which places religious paintings closer to the icons. A case in point is the well-known Madonna Litta by Leonardo da Vinci at the Leningrad Hermitage Museum. It is not an icon and certainly not an Orthodox icon. Yet in this small painting, there is so much human, or humane, beauty, while there is so much divine light shining through the window against which the Virgin Mary is pictured as she feeds the divine infant, that even if it would be hard to pray before the picture, one is readily moved by it, and it is quite natural to place a copy of it in a place of honor, somewhere near the holy icons.

Wall paintings in many Russian Orthodox churches copy religious paintings by great artists such as Repin, Nesterov, Vasnetsov, and many others. As to Nesterov and Vasnetsov, their paintings in the Saint Vladimir Cathedral in Kiev, for example, are not just religious, but iconographic painting.

Of course the modern man whose aesthetic tastes center around the living beauty of the visible world is more likely inclined to see religious painting as being more readily understood than the stylized symbolism of the icons, especially those of the old, or the so-called "Old Believer" style. One must be a Leskov or a Melnikov-Pecherski to understand and lovingly depict the rapture caused by contemplating a Sealed Angel or icons in the Stroganov style, by Rublev or Novgorodian iconographers. However, stylized symbolism is indispensable in iconography, even if such iconography is pictorial for modern tastes. The fact is that the mysterious interior and divinely inspired essence cannot be pictured simply by artistic workmanship which is too human, too down to earth, and too close to what is materially experienced. Thus, the Russian painter Ivanov who worked for many years at his painting "Christ Appearing to the People" could not succeed in clearly picturing Christ's face. But a twelve-year-old girl, not a painter at all, in an artless picture of the Mother of God with the infant has drawn the Savior's eyes so that they stare straight into one's soul with the mystery they hold—and it is all done by a few strokes of

black paint. This drawing is no icon and no religious painting. In referring to it, I would just like to emphasize the significance of symbolism and stylization in iconography. However aesthetically beautiful religious painting might be, this beauty just accompanies or adds to the icon, extending it towards the human and the earthly.

Conclusion

"The Cross is the keeper of all the universe, The Cross is the beauty of the Church," an Orthodox hymn says. These two lines reflect, in the same way that a small lake in the woods mirrors the blue infinity of the sky and the fiery disc of the sun, two ideas: what Father Pavel Florensky wrote on the significance of the cross as the sign and the real instrument of stability in the world, as if a world center of gravity, and what F. M. Dostoyevsky thought about "beauty saving the world," referred by the church hymn writer to the Church itself.

Concerning the interests of the "aesthetics of iconography," we should have said in the same context, "The beauty of the Church are the Cross and the holy icons," and possessing this beauty the Church is beautiful herself serving the salvation of the world.

The Holy Eucharist and the other sacraments are the foci of the liturgy in Orthodoxy, and the grace flowing from them spreads outside the Church, according to the Good News. In its very essence and through works of love it becomes the "bread of peace." The communion of the divine body and blood at the eucharistic banquet is the true partaking of the grace-giving gift of the heavenly bridegroom where he, Christ, the head of the Church, is the heavenly bridegroom eternally expected and eternally met in the Eucharist, himself the master, himself the host, himself the sacrificing, and himself the sacrificed, himself the divine food and drink.

Just as the wise virgins were about to meet the bridegroom and had their lanterns full of fragrant oil, the Christian nation, the Orthodox people, bring forward for Christ, the divine bridegroom, in liturgy, the fragrant oil of beauty which like holy Chrism combines the best, the most precious and magnificent components: the Church rule, the hymns, the readings of the holy Scripture and pious poetic writings, the singing, the incense, the light of icon lamps and candles, the celebrants' vestments, the ringing of the bells, the churches, and the holy icons themselves. There is beauty in it all. It all is highly aesthetic.

Thus, the aesthetics of iconography in its internal sense and its external expression is the ever-abiding and ever-inspiring beauty of the Church itself. It is the beauty of the spiritual and the material

bound together; within a multiplicity of forms it creates an integral unity, the unity of the body of Christ, the Church, where Christ himself is the most beautiful of all.

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Facing People of Other Faiths From an Orthodox Point of View

METROPOLITAN ANASTASIOS YANNOULATOS^Δ

THROUGH THE NARROWING OF THE FINANCIAL, CULTURAL, AND SCIENTIFIC boundaries among all peoples of our planet, the world is becoming more and more an organic unit, "a huge city" where the pluralism of ideas and values dominates.

Besides Christian principles and the newer European ideas, other categories of thought having their sources in the strata of different religions, mostly Asian ones, have come into the world scene. As we proceed to a world community seeking peace and justice, and as interdependence among nations and peoples continues to increase, some old questions emerge with greater and greater intensity in the area of religious conscience. We Christians are no longer allowed to ignore the fact that more than two-thirds of the world population share in "the hope we have in us" (1 Pet 3.15), and that there exist other religious ideas which have shaped the thought, conscience, and sub-conscience of millions of our fellow human beings with whom we now live and will have to live.¹

In this paper we shall, first, start with a brief historical survey and classification of the various Christian views concerning other religions, and, second, draw a sketch of an Orthodox theological thesis. Thus, our theme will be limited to considering how we as Christians should confront and evaluate other religions as we view them from

¹In 1987 the total population of the earth was approximately 5,004,622,800. Of this number 1,646,007,800 are estimated to be Christians, a percentage of 32.9% of the world population; D. Barret, "Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission: 1987, *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 11 (1987) 25. As an introduction to our theme, see also Anastasios Yannoulatos, "Towards World Community," *Ecumenical Review* 26 (1974) 619.

our point of view, through our theological thinking, experience and spirituality, while remaining faithful to our Christian principles.

This topic, usually expressed under the code words "Theology of Religions," forms together with ecclesiology the most important basis for today's theology.

The problem of understanding other religions from a Christian point of view presents not only theological interest, but also multiform practical repercussions for the Christian attitude towards the spiritual searches of our time, and generally for the course of humankind.²

Periods of Confrontation:

a) Before a systematical answer to this extremely serious topic is given, we need to remember that this problem is not a recent occurrence. Relative questions were faced by Christians in the first centuries (first to sixth), when the Church had her first confrontation with the Greco-Roman religious world. This took place in the formative period of Christianity with regard to ecclesiastical organization and theological development. This period of growth occurred under the pressure of the existing Roman Empire. Today, the whole perspective of the problem has become essentially different. Nevertheless, the early Christian period continues to offer us some very important theological guidelines.

When Christianity met with Greco-Roman religious practices, it allied with Greek philosophy and adopted the criticism against polytheism and popular religion.³ The Alexandrian school (especially with Clement and Origen) tried to demonstrate the existence of a close bond between Greek religious philosophy and Christian teaching.

After the edict of Milan the position of Christianity changed in relation to its external environment. Nevertheless, the existing clash continued in theoretical as well as in moral fields. The conflict between the old religion and Christianity was made more complex because of the simultaneous fight against heretics within Christianity. In the midst of strong pluralism and intense, multifaceted theoretical con-

²From the vast bibliography on the specific issues in the following notes, I shall give only a limited number of references. For an historical outline on our topic and the related bibliography up to 1971, see Anastasios Yannoulatos, *Various Christian Approaches to the Other Religions* (Athens, 1971); see also footnotes 18-21 below.

³J. Danielou, *Message evangelique et culture hellenistique aux 2e et 3e siecles* (Tournai, 1961); W. Jaeger, *Das fruehe Christentum und die griechische Bildung* (Berlin, 1963); E. R. Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety. Some Aspects of Religious Experience from Marcus Aurelius to Constantine* (London, 1965); H. Chadwick, *Origen contra Celsum* (Cambridge, 1965); and H. Chadwick, *Early Christian Thought and the Classical Tradition, Studies in Justin, Clement and Origen* (Oxford, 1966).

flict, patristic theology was developed. This period still continues to offer us some key theological principles.

b) During the second period (seventh to fifteenth centuries), Christianity formed a religious unit which was sociologically structured. The Church no longer had to face only pre-existing religious beliefs and systems, but also a new religion, Islam, which was coming to the forefront of history, full of spiritual and political wrath, seeking world dominion. This newly established religion claimed that it surpassed all revelations of the Old and New Testaments and was the culmination and fulfillment of all God's promises.

Due to the accelerated propagation of Islam, the Christian world was now obliged to adopt a dynamic attitude in order to check this dangerous adversary. Thus, various important theological positions of the first Christian period were pushed aside or forgotten. Christians now had to defend themselves in an aggressive manner. They saw Islam as a religious-political system which distorted the truth. Furthermore, within a Christian eschatological perspective they felt the appearance of Islam as the starting point of the final fight spoken of in John's Revelation. The Christian world mobilized a whole system of defense, first in the east, where Christianity was directly attacked, and afterwards in the west. Within this atmosphere, a series of theological treatises appeared in Byzantium in the form of a "dialogue" between Christians and Muslims.⁴ Simultaneously, a military defense was organized to protect that which was holy and sacred.

In Western Christianity influenced by monastic orders and knightly ideals, there developed an ideology of attack, which culminated in the crusades.⁵ These crusades finally wounded Christianity deeply

⁴On the Byzantine attitude towards Islam, see: Yannoulatos, *Various Christian Approaches*, pp. 32-40; E. Fritsch, *Islam und Christentum im Mittelalter* (Breslau, 1930); W. Eichner, "Die Nachrichten über den Islam bei den Byzantinern," *Der Islam* 23 (1936) 133 and 197; and G. H. Beck, *Kirche und Theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich* (Munich, 1959). E. Δ. Σδράχα, 'Η κατά τοῦ 'Ισλάμ πολεμική τῶν Βυζαντινῶν Θεολόγων [Polemic against Islam Carried on by Byzantine Theologians] (Thessalonike, 1961); J. Meyendorff, "Byzantine Views of Islam," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 18 (1964) 115; and A. Th. Khoury, *Les Theologiens Byzantins et l'Islam. Textes et Auteurs (8e-13e S.)* 2nd ed. (Paris, 1969). For an analytical bibliography, see A. Th. Khoury, *Der theologische Streit der Byzantiner mit dem Islam* (Paderborn, 1969) pp. 319-29. Compare A. Th. Khoury, *Polemique byzantine contre l'Islam* (Munster, 1966), 2nd ed. (Florence, 1969) and D. Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam: The "Heresy of the Ishmaelites"* (Leiden, 1972).

⁵C. H. Becker, "Christliche Polemik und islamische Dogmenbildung," *Islamstudien* 1 (1924) 432. Fritsch, *Islam und Christentum*. R. F. Merkel, "Der Islam im Wandel abendlandischen Verstehens," *Studi e materiali de storia delle religioni* 13 (1937) 68. J. I. Addison, *The Christian Approach to the Moslem* (New York, 1966) pp. 11-40.

in the East and poisoned Islamic-Christian relations. Nevertheless, during this period important voices were raised in the West taking a sympathetic attitude towards the people of other faiths (e.g., Abelard, Thomas Aquinas, Nicholas of Cusa).

A special segment of history during that period deals with the attitude of Christians in Persia and India within the area of Asiatic religions. This needs to be studied more thoroughly, however. A very interesting aspect has to do with the missionary effort of the Persian Church (Nestorian) which has displayed great sensitivity towards the religious traditions of China.⁶

In the third period (sixteenth to twentieth centuries) some new historical elements emerged: in the Western world, following the Reformation there appeared more and more ecclesiastical communities and confessions which overemphasized some of the Christian truths. Each one of them developed its own religious climate and ethos. The theological tenets adopted by these various confessions to defend themselves against one another became more and more limited. Religious enthusiasm was very quickly transformed into fanaticism and a tendency towards exclusiveness. This developed very soon into "Christian theses." When one reads certain statements of the first reformers—with the exception of Zwingli—one is surprised to see such a negative attitude towards other religions. Thus, in their theological confessional synthesis there is a dominating trend towards conservatism and deprecation of other religions.⁷ Additional characteristics of Western Christianity in that period were the great missionary efforts of the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries and the theological ideas mobilized in order to sustain this effort both theoretically and financially. In this way, too much emphasis was given to the need for salvation of those who were living "in the dark land of death." This gloomy image of other civilizations and uncivilized "savages," etc., was strikingly projected. Most unfortunately, the

⁶About the encounter of Christians of the East with Asiatic religiosity, see J. Stewart, *Nestorian Missionary Enterprise. The Story of a Church on Fire* (Madras, 1928); E.L. Browne, *The Eclipse of Christianity in Asia. From the Time of Muhammad till the Fourteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1933); J. Foster, *The Church of the T'ang Dynasty* (London, 1939); and A. Yannoulatos, "The Missionary Activities of the Churches of the East in Central and Eastern Asia," *Porefthendes-Go Ye* 3 (1951) 26.

⁷H. Vossberg, *Luthers Kritik aller Religionen* (Leipzig, 1922). W. Holsten, *Christentum und nichtchristliche Religion nach der Auffassung Luthers* (Gutersloh, 1932). For a sympathetic analysis of Calvin's thesis, see H. Kraemer, *The Christian Message in a non-Christian World* (London, 1938), reprinted in 1958. For a critical analysis, see L. Caperan, *Le probleme du salut des infideles* (2nd ed., Toulouse, 1934) pp. 230-36.

missionary expedition was connected with imperialism, which in a direct or indirect way cultivated an arrogant attitude towards the religions and cultural values of other peoples. Nevertheless, this closer contact and acquaintance with other peoples led to a more careful study of their religious traditions. Following this, we came to a new, more objective knowledge, which helped the development of respect together with a readiness to understand each other. This way of thinking has been increasingly imposed upon Christian theological thought during the last decades, and nowadays we find it in the foreground of the Roman Catholic world as well as in the whole ecumenical movement.⁸

Main Christian Views Concerning Other Religions

If we try to summarize and classify the various theories formulated by Christians in the course of the last twenty centuries regarding other religions, the result will be a spectrum of opinions of various shades ranging from absolute rejection to full acceptance. I shall trace them briefly.⁹

Religions are the work of the devil. They do not contain any truth or value. Nothing in them could have a place in the new reality of the Church, a reality which is the unique way to God. This view was adopted by a great number of Christians of early centuries, who considered the pagan gods "demons" which were competing against the true God. (This was the view among intellectuals, e.g., Tertullian of Carthage, 155-200).¹⁰

An elaborated formulation of the first view, using a complex theological analysis and anthropological sensitivity, maintains that religion is a concern and formation of the corrupt nature of man who has no possibility to know God. In the last analysis, religion is unbelief. Revelation, or better yet, the Gospel, is absolutely different; it is the crisis of all religions. This was the basic position of the Calvinist tradition culminating in the theology of the "dialectical school" of the Protestant world (K. Barth, Kraemer).¹¹

⁸A. Yannoulatos, *Various Christian Approaches*, pp. 51-102, where also is a bibliography.

⁹The following paragraph in the present paper is a modified version of the summary given in the above mentioned study.

¹⁰"What is, then, in common between Athens and Jerusalem? (Quid Athenis et Hierosolymis?)" — Tertullian, *The Prescription of Heretics* 7: PL 2,20B-21A. Nevertheless, when he maintains that the soul is Christian by nature ("O testimonium animae naturaliter Christianae!") — *Apologetics* 17: PL 1.433, he defines an anthropological basis for approaching the non-Christian religious experience.

¹¹K. Barth, *Die Kirchliche Dogmatik* Vol. 1, 2 (Munich, 1932), pp. 327ff, English translation: *Church Dogmatics*, Vols.1-4 (Edinburgh, 1962). H. Kraemer, *The Christian Message; Religion and the Christian Faith* (London, 1956); *World Cultures and World Religions* (London, 1960). In his last book, *Why Christianity of All Religions?*

c) Man is not entirely incapable of contemplating the mystery of God. He has not remained in total darkness. By his reason, which is contemplation of the natural order, and by his highest intuitions and experience of conscience, he has always known something about God's existence and perfection. This first human intuition and knowledge of God is a preamble of the Christian faith. This is the theme upon which many ideas emerged (with varying shades of meaning), formulated by the fathers of the early Church¹² and by the proponents of natural theology (developed by Thomas Aquinas),¹³ as well as by those of the more classic teaching of Roman Catholic theology. Concerning the limitation of the natural ability of man to know God, many positions with various divergences have been established.

d) Moving nearer to the aforementioned view is the teaching that sees the history of mankind's religions as a preparation or training for the Christian religion. Christianity is the fulfillment, completion and perfection of the religious life of mankind, and as such remains unique.¹⁴ Some theologians maintain that completion and fulfillment took place in continuity; other, that is about a radical, revolutionary change, i.e., a discontinuity. The incomplete "cosmic revelation" has finally been outmoded by Christian revelation. Christianity is not the expression of the inherent development of man's religious conscience. The transcendent living God enters into history in order to introduce man into a realm otherwise completely closed to him (J. Daniélou).¹⁵

(London, 1962), Kraemer slightly modified his positions.

¹²A. Luneau, "Pour aider au dialogue: Les Peres et les religions non Chretiennes," *Nouvelle Revue Theologique* 99 (1967) 821 and 914. Concise title in English: "The Fathers and the non-Christian Religions," *Bulletin; Secretariat pro non Christianis* 3 (1968) 5. Compare also A. Luneau, *L'histoire du salut chez les Peres de l'Eglise* (Paris, 1964). H. de Lubac, "Les religions humaines d'apres les Peres de l'Eglise" in *Paradoxe et mystere de l'Eglise* (Paris, 1967), pp. 120-163. P. Hacher, "The Religions of the Gentiles as viewed by Fathers of the Church," *Zeitschrift fur Missions und Religionswissenschaft* 54 (1970) 253. Yannoulatos, *Various Christian Approaches*, pp. 13-31.

¹³Th. Ohm, *Die Stellung der Heiden zu Natur und Uebernatur nach dem hl. Thomas* (Munster, 1927); M. Seckler, "Das Heil der Nichtevangelisierten in thomistischer Sicht," *Theologische Quartalschrift* 140 (1960) 38; *Das Heil in der Geschichte; Geschichtstheologisches Denken bei Thomas von Aquin* (Munich, 1964); and E. H. Schillebeeckx, "L'instinct de la foi selon S. Thomas d'Aquin," *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Theologiques* 48 (1964) 377.

¹⁴E. Konig, "Das Christentum und die Weltreligionen" in *Christus und die Religionen der Erde* Vol. 3 (Freiburg, 1951) pp. 761-68.

¹⁵J. Danielou, "Le probleme theologique des religions non chretiennes" in *Archevi di Filosofia, Metafisica ed esperienza religiosa* (Rome, 1956); Compare

The various religions do not simply represent the search for God by humanity, but also rest on revelation. No nation at any time in history has remained without sparkles of revelation. In all religions there are supernatural elements of grace. There is a "general" and a "special" revelation. The non-Christian religions belong to the "general" revelation. The revelatory character of religion comes to expression in the idea of holiness (N. Söderblom).¹⁶

The most extreme view came to support the thesis that Christianity as a historical religion does not possess the fullness of truth and divine revelation. It is a microcosm in the macrocosm of the history of religions, simply a firstborn religion among other brothers. The history of salvation is realized in the whole frame of the religious history of humankind. Furthermore, some Protestant theologians formulated the view that it is a synthesis of the world's religions that will bring about the desired completion (e.g., the "Religionswissenschaftliche Schule" of Marburg, as reflected in the writings of F. Heiler, E. Benz).¹⁷

The aforesaid diagram is but a rough systematization in six consecutive phases of the various Christian views that have been formulated in different periods concerning other religions. The variation of these views is related not only to the emphasis given at times by different confessions or theologians, but also to the concrete political, cultural, and historical conditions under which they have evolved. In our time, we definitely have many possibilities for a thorough study of the problem, while taking into consideration the old and new data found in the history of religions.¹⁸

J. Danielou, *Les Saints Païens de l' Ancien Testament* (Paris, 1956); *Essais sur le mystère de l' histoire* (Paris, 1955).

¹⁶N. Soderblom, *Natürliche Theologie und allgemeine Religionsgeschichte* (Stockholm, 1913); *Der lebendige Gott im Zeugnis der Religionsgeschichte* (Munich, 1942).

¹⁷F. Heiler, "Versuche einer Synthese der Religionen und einer neuen Menschheitsreligion" in *Die Religionen der Menschheit in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart* (Stuttgart, 1962) pp. 877-89. Idem., "Das Christentum und die Religionen," E. Benz, "On Understanding Non-Christian Religions," in M. Eliade and J. M. Kitagawa, eds., *The History of Religions, Essays in Methodology* (Chicago, 1959), pp. 115-31. Idem., "Ideen zu einer Theologie der Religionsgeschichte," *Mainzer Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur. Abhandlungen der geistes-und sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse* 5 (1960) 421. See also: J. Hick and B. Hebblethwaite, eds., *Christianity and Other Religions* (Glasgow, 1980); and W. C. Smith, *Towards a World Theology* (London, 1980).

¹⁸For a general bibliography up to 1960, see: E. Benz and M. Nambara, *Das Christentum und die nichtchristlichen Hochreligionen; Begegnung und Auseinandersetzung; eine internationale Bibliographie* (Leiden, 1960). The present

Coming to the core of our issue, that is, the theological understanding of other religions, we can see that today the most impressive divergence in views continues to exist in the Protestant world.¹⁹ Within this peculiar freedom of individual theological thinking, various positions are supported, ranging from the most syncretistic to the most conservative and fundamentalist. In the Roman Catholic world the cohesive structure of the Church gave a balanced attitude in the past, and especially after Vatican Council II, an opening and broadness of thought.²⁰

paper was ready to be published when a recent bibliography appeared: S. Immanuel David, ed., *Christianity and the Encounter with Other Religions. A Select Bibliography* (Bangalore, 1988). It comprises 880 entries, both Roman Catholic and Protestant studies, restricted to English publications after 1929, with an emphasis on the Indian context.

¹⁹Among many studies, see: A. Schweitzer, *Das Christentum und die Weltreligionen* (Munich, 1925); in English: J. Powers, trans., *Christianity and the Religions of the World*, 6th impr. (London, 1960). P. Tillich, *Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions* (New York, 1963). S. C. Neill, *Christian Faith and Other Faiths: The Christian Dialogue with Other Religions* (Oxford, 1970). P. Knitter, *Towards a Protestant Theology of Religions* (Marburg, 1974). A. Race, *Christians and Religious Pluralism, Patterns in the Christian Theology of Religions* (London, 1983). K. Cracknell, *Towards a New Relationship: Christians and People of Other Faiths* (London, 1986). Choan-Seng Song, "The Power of God's Grace in the World of Religion," *Ecumenical Review* 39 (1987) 44. The dialogue with people of other faiths has become a major issue in the ecumenical movement during the last decades. The sub-unit, "Dialogue with People of Living Faiths," of the World Council of Churches regularly publishes the reports of various consultations organized by it, as well as the bulletin, *Current Dialogue*. See among the many publications: S. J. Samartha, ed., *Living Faiths and the Ecumenical Movement* (Geneva, 1971); *Dialogue Between Men of Living Faiths, Papers Presented at a Consultation Held at Ajaltoun, Lebanon, March 1970* (Geneva, 1971); *Living Faiths and Ultimate Goals. A Continuing Dialogue* (Geneva, 1974); *Towards World Community. The Colombo Papers* (Geneva, 1975). See also: S. J. Samartha, *Courage for Dialogue. Ecumenical Issues in Inter-Religious Relationships* (Geneva, 1981). Other editions from the W. C. C.: *Guidelines on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies* (Geneva, 1979). *Jewish-Christian Dialogue. Six Years of Christian-Jewish Consultations* (Geneva, 1975). *Christian Presence and Witness in Relation to Muslim Neighbours* (Mombasa, Kenya, 1979), second printing, 1982. W. Ariarajah, *The Bible and People of Other Faiths* (Geneva, 1985).

²⁰Concerning the Second Vatican Council, see: W. M. Abbott, ed. and J. Gallagher, ed. and trans., *The Documents of Vatican II* (New York, 1966), see especially: "The Declaration on Religious Freedom," pp. 675-96; "The Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church," pp. 580-630; "The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church," paragraphs 14-16, pp. 32-35; "The Constitution on Divine Revelation," paragraphs 3, 6, pp. 112, 114. P. Rossano, "Quid de non Christianis Oecumenicum Concilium Vaticanum II docuerit," *Bulletin; Secretariatus pro non Christianis* 1 (1966) 15; "Christianity and the Religions," *Bulletin; Secretariatus pro non Christianis* 4 (1969) 97.

Christians in the East have often lived within societies having a cultural, linguistic and religious pluralism; thus, they developed an attitude of respect, tolerance and understanding towards other religious experiences. In the Orthodox world we have no decision of an official ecclesiastical body concerning other religions.²¹ The Orthodox Church has allowed wider margins for personal freedom in thought and expression, but always within the frame of the living tradition of the Church. Drawing upon the theological scope and spiritual experience of Orthodoxy, I will try to sketch an Orthodox theological thesis.

E. Dhanis, M. Dhavanomy, J. Goets, and others, *L' Eglise et les Religions* (Rome, 1966). Secretariat pro non Christianis, ed., *Vers la rencontre des Religions; suggestions pour le dialogue* (Vatican, 1967). Among the many studies by Roman Catholics, see: J. A. Cuttat, *La rencontre des religions* (Paris, 1953); English translation, *The Encounter of Religions* (New York, 1960). K. Rahner, "Das Christentum und die nicht-christlichen Religionen." In *Schriften zur Theologie* (Einsiedeln, 1962) pp. 136-58. H. R. Schlette, *Die Religionen as Thema der Theologie* (Freiburg, 1963); English translation, *Towards a Theology of Religions* (London, 1966). R. Panikkar, *Religionen und die Religion* (Munich 1965); *Salvation in Christ: Concreteness and Universality* (Santa Barbara, 1972); *The Intra-religious Dialogue* (New York, 1978). H. de Lubac, *L' Homme Devant Dieu* Vol. 3 (Paris, 1964); J. Ratzinger, "Der christliche Glaube und die Weltreligionen," *Gott in der Welt* (Festschrift für K. Rahner, 1964) pp. 287-05; R. C. Zaehner, *The Catholic Church and World Religions* (London, 1964); H. Fries, "Das Christentum und die Religionen der Welt" in *Das Christentum und die Weltreligionen* (Wurzburg, 1965) pp. 15-37; H. Maurier, *Essai d'une theologie du paganisme* (Paris, 1965); H. van Straelen, *Our Attitude towards Other Religions* (Tokyo, 1965); P. F. Knitter, "European Protestant and Catholic Approaches to the World Religions: Complements and Contrasts," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 12 (1975) 13; "Roman Catholic Approaches to Other Religions. Development and Tensions," *International Bulletin for Missionary Research* 8 (1984) 50; *No Other Name? A critical study of Christian Attitudes Towards the World Religions* (London, 1985); and Secretariat pro non Christianis, ed., *The Attitude of the Church towards the Followers of Other Religions* (Vatican, 1984).

²¹ Even the writings by Orthodox theologians on our issue are very few; they only touch upon some aspects of it. See: L. Filippidis, "Greece and Paul." In *Festal Volume of the 1900th Anniversary of St. Paul's Arrival in Greece* (Athens, 1953); *Religionsgeschichte als Heilsgeschichte in der Weltgeschichte* (Athens, 1953); *Ιστορία της εποχής της Καινής Διαθήκης εξ έποφως παγκοσμίον καί πανθρησκειακής* [History of the Era of the New Testament from a worldwide and pan-religious point of view], (Athens, 1958); *Σύγχρονοι θρησκειακά κινήσεις προς πανανθρώπινην ένότητα* [Modern Religious Movements Towards Unity of the Whole of Humanity] (Athens, 1966). N. Arseniev, *Revelation of Life Eternal; An Introduction to the Christian Message* (Crestwood, 1965). George Khodre, "Christianity in a Pluralistic World — The Economy of the Holy Spirit," *The Ecumenical Review* 23 (1971) 118. J. N. Karmiris, "Η παγκοσμιότητα της έν Χριστώ σωτηρίας," [The Universality of Salvation in Christ], *Πρακτικά της 'Ακαδημίας 'Αθηνών* [Proceedings of the Academy of Athens] 55 (1981) 261; "Η σωτηρία των έκτός της 'Εκκλησίας ανθρώπων του Θεού" [The

In the Western world the debate on the theological evaluation of other religions is invariably centered on christology. The theological thought of the West regarding this issue was especially defined by Augustinian and Calvinistic inheritance, and secondly by Lutheran and Wesleyan influences. But in the Orthodox tradition, consideration and confrontation of all relative problems, especially the anthropological one, are always based on the Trinitarian perspective.

The Mystery of God

In this perspective I would like to highlight three important keys: the universal radiance of God's glory, common humanity, and God's continuous care for creation and humankind.

Independently of what people at times have or have not believed, there exists only one God. "I am the Lord, and there is no other, besides me there is no God" (Is 45.5; cf. 21.22). This one God, the "Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all" (Eph 4.6), created the universe, and constantly acts within the world and history. Men may have various views about him, but there are no other gods.

One of the fundamental truths of the Christian faith holds that God is incomprehensible and inaccessible in his ultimate essence. However, biblical revelation transcends the impasse of the incomprehensible nature of God by affirming that, while God's ultimate Being remains unknown, his holy presence nevertheless actively reveals itself in the world and the universe through the manifestation of his glory (*doxa*, *kaboth*, *shekinah*). When God reveals himself through various divine manifestations, it is not his essence but his glory that is revealed; for it is only his glory that human beings are able to approach and comprehend. This glory is the dynamic, creative, and transfiguring energy of the Holy Trinity. The glory of the triune God embraces the universe (τὰ πάντα), and brings all things within the scope of his love.

It is at this critical point of how God is incomprehensible and yet self-revealing by his own initiative that patristic thought has tried to provide illumination by distinguishing between the essence and the energies of God.²² God who is transcendent cannot be identified with any human concept or idea as in the manner of a philosophical definition of essence. What human beings are able to conceive is the

Salvation of the People of God Outside the Church] *Πρακτικά τῆς Ἀκαδημίας Ἀθηνῶν* [Proceedings of the Academy of Athens] 56 (1982) 391.

²²J. Meyendorff, *St. Gregory Palamas and Orthodox Spirituality* (Crestwood, 1971).

glory of God. The distance between creature and creator remains immeasurable. The glory of God manifests simultaneously the immeasurable distance, yet also the proximity of God.

The starting point of the Christian life and the foundation of its hope is the reality of the glory of God penetrating all creation. The angelic hymn revealed in the prophetic vision of Isaiah celebrates triumphantly and doxologically this central truth: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is full of his glory" (Is 6.3). This hymn expressed, on the one hand, the wonder and awe before the mystery of God and, on the other, the certainty that his glory penetrates all heaven and earth and every form and species of life.

Besides faith in one God and his worldwide dominion, emphasis is given to the certainty of the common origin of all humanity without exception, the creation of the first couple by God himself in his own image (Gen 1.27) after his likeness (Gen 1.26), "in the likeness of God" (Gen 5.1; cf. Acts 17.26); and the certainty regarding a common destination and purpose. All men and women, irrespective of race, style of life, or language, carry in themselves the divine "likeness," i.e., a mind, free will, and love. Due to the unity of the human race, sin became an all-human infirmity. Human nature remains united both in its greatness and in its fall. The position of all people is common, subject to the judgment of God, "since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom 3.23).

A basic theological certainty in the East is that all human beings have the "inclination," the "longing for the search of God" (πόθον . . . κατά Θεοῦ ζῆσιν), according to the words of Saint Gregory the Theologian, and recognize the possibility of a first dim knowledge of God through reason, which Saint Gregory describes as "godlike and divine" (θεοειδὲς καὶ θεῖον).²³ But also, they have the inherent capacity to love and dimly feel the primacy of love.

The great tragedy of humanity's disobedience did not suspend the radiance of God's glory. His glory has continued to fill heaven and earth, the entire universe. According to patristic thought, the Fall did not destroy the divine likeness in humanity. What had been wounded—without having been absolutely destroyed—was the possibility of mankind to feel and conceive of this radiance and its message. Let me illustrate this with a modern metaphor: If the television receiver is damaged or not synchronized, if there is no antenna, we cannot have the right connection with the central transmitter. In that way, image and sound are altered. Idolatry has been an adven-

²³Saint Gregory the Theologian, "Λόγοι Θεολογικοί" [Theological Orations] 2, 17, 15, *Βιβλιοθήκη Ἑλλήνων Πατέρων* [Library of Greek Fathers] Vol 59, p. 227.

ture due to the receiving of distorted images or to the interference of confused pictures and projections deriving from the disturbed thought, desire and conscience of humanity.

From the clear witness given in the first chapters of the Bible, it appears that religious experience has its roots in God's original revelation to humanity. Innate religious feeling is related to the universal character of the divine revelation to mankind.

During the human adventure, God has not ceased to care for the whole world which he has created. Not only were men and women searching for God, but he also was searching for them. In many instances in the Old Testament, descriptions are given of God's initiative to help and guide mankind. According to biblical history, several "covenants" between God and humanity took place, which still keep their importance and validity. The first was made with Adam and Eve, that is, with the representatives of all mankind. The second was with Noah and the new humanity who were saved from the flood (Gen 8). It is repeated with much emphasis in Genesis that it is a covenant with "all flesh that is upon the earth," "This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth" (In the Septuagint: "... and all living soul in all flesh ..."). The third covenant was made with Abram (Gen 12), the head of a people, who were to play a basic role within God's plan for the salvation of all mankind. The last, final and ever "New Covenant" took place in Jesus Christ, the new Adam. But all human beings are in a relationship to God through a covenant that he sealed.

The Old Testament, being the sacred book of the people of Israel, describes the care of God for his chosen people. This does not mean that God put an end to his relations with the other nations. His former covenants with Adam and Noah continued to be valid. In the short diagram which the Old Testament traces concerning the long period before the time of Abraham, the analogy of the various epiphanies of God is very important. The "first devotion" was preserved not only within the Hebrew environment, but also outside it. Enoch, Melchizedech and Job were not Israelites. Nevertheless, they knew the true God and were communicating with him.

The Old and New Testaments steadily refer to the authority of God over the universe. After defining in the first chapter the more extended frames of God's actions, the Pentateuch draws attention to the part of the whole, to the history and adventure of Israel, which also has a universal meaning and dimension. The basic book of Israel's worshipping life, the Psalms, repeatedly refers to God's universality: "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein" (23.11). "For God is the king of all the earth; ..."

(47.7). "...and for the world and all that is in it is mine" (50.12), "...and his kingdom rules over all" (103.19), "The earth, O Lord, is full of thy steadfast love, ..." (119.64).²⁴

The prophets also clearly announce God's purpose of gathering on the last day, the "eschaton," "all nations." "This is the purpose that is purposed concerning the whole earth; and this is the hand that is stretched out over the nations" (Is 14.26). "... I am coming to gather all nations and all tongues; and they shall come and shall see my glory" (Is 66.18). Likewise, Malachi points out: "For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name is great among the nations, and in every place incense is offered to my name, and a pure offering; for my name is great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts" (Mal 1.11). It is with unique expressiveness that the book of Jonah underlines God's mercy and compassion to the nations. The initiative for the salvation of humanity comes from God. He is the first to act. It is he who sent Moses to set free the Israelites; it is he who gave them the law on Mount Sinai; it is he who chose the prophets to speak to his people.

On the basis of the above deliberation, we see in the religious experiences of humanity, on the one hand, an intense longing and search of man after the supreme reality, and on the other, an assimilation of some rays of the universal divine radiance. God's glory has not ceased to embrace the universe, to radiate and to illuminate the cosmos. God continues to care for the whole of humanity and his creation.

The Christological Issue

The theological consideration of the other religions comes to a special tension when we examine it from the basic Christian principle of the incarnation.

a) Seen from various sides, Christianity appears in many ways to resemble other religions. All religions refer, more or less, to a transcendental reality, or to a supreme being. It is confirmed that even peoples considered "primitive" have always had a belief in a supreme being, to whom they ascribed various attributes (wise, powerful, kind, etc.).²⁵ Likewise, other religions as well have sacred books, dogmatic conceptions, ethical principles, priesthood, and monastic

²⁴Compare, also: Psalms 22.28; 57.11; 65.5; 66.1,4; 72.19; 82.8; 83.18; 86.9; 95.3; 96.1; 98.4; 104.28; 113.3,4.

²⁵J. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (London, 1969), reprinted 1970; *Concepts of God in Africa* (London, 1970). A. Yannoulatos, 'Κύριος τῆς λαμπρότητος.' 'Ὁ Θεός τῶν παρὰ τό ὄρος Κέννα φυλῶν' ['Lord of Brightness.' The God of the Tribes Near Mount Kenya] (Athens, 1971), 3rd ed. 1983; Πουχάν'γκα — Ὁ Δημιουργός [Ruhanga — The Creator] (Athens, 1975).

life. But the radical new and different message which Christianity offers to humankind is that this God, this supreme being and reality, is himself love—he does not simply possess, among other characteristics, compassion and kindness, but he is love!—and that God truly became a human being.

The mystery of the trinitarian God has been revealed through his initiative in a way inconceivable to human thought, perception or intuition. This mystery is condensed in the fact that “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (Jn 3.16). This Love takes on human nature through the incarnation of the Logos, the second person of the Holy Trinity: “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (Jn 1.14).

All the phases of the life of Christ are new manifestations of the glory of God. According to Johannine theology, the passion and crucifixion especially are the revelation of divine glory. Christ himself, in his last prayer to the Father, directly refers to this truth by organically connecting the subjects of love, life, and glory which form the expression of the process of redemption (Jn 11.1-26). Through his passion, which is immediately followed by the resurrection, Christ enters “into His glory” (Lk 24.26), decisively breaking down the power of death and receiving “all authority in heaven and on earth” (Mt 28.18). The risen Christ through his ascension in glory “unites earthly things to heavenly things,” raising human nature to the right hand of the Father of glory, and guiding human history to its final destiny.

Those events, to which the Christian message persistently refers, are unique and radically different from all other events in human history. They give a totally new perspective to the conception about God and about man. The incarnation introduces to human history an eschatological center, Christ, who gives new meaning to the past, present, and future. Since human life has acquired a new quality—and I dare to use the expression—“new chromosomes” it is evolving within a new dynamic. Through Christ “a new creation” has begun.

b) For a study of our issue in a christological context there are two basic keys: the “incarnation” of the Logos, and Christ as the “new Adam.” Through the incarnation of the Word the whole of human nature, humanity, was brought to God. Consequently, there is a difference between humanity before Christ and after Christ. Through the incarnation, the first “communion” of human beings with God has been restored, far safer than at first. By his actions and sacrifice, Christ “destroyed the works of the devil” (Jn 3.8) and broke the demonic traps and network which the devil wove for cen-

turies in the most important centers of human experience, existence, and relationship, especially in the sensitive and critical area of religious beliefs.

The demonic element had polluted even the religious conscience of Israel—mainly by means of ritualism and hypocrisy. This same element had intruded into other religions much more powerfully. For this reason, wherever the Gospel is proclaimed, the Church has always had to select among the different elements of pre-existing religious conceptions and customs. Some of them are accepted, others rejected, still others transformed and harmonized with its message.²⁶

The deep belief in the uniqueness of Jesus Christ within a great number of circles in Western Christianity was emphasized as “exclusiveness”—especially in the climate of religious fanaticism which frequently developed during the last four centuries. Some verses of the New Testament, e.g., “no one comes to the Father, but by me” (Jn 14.6), and “there is salvation in no one else” (Acts 4.12) were isolated from their context and used as strongholds for a Christology of “exclusiveness.”

In the Eastern Church, Christian thought has moved within a path of more understanding. Justin Martyr (100?-165), applying the philosophical methods of his era, followed the way opened by St. John the Evangelist in his preamble about the Logos. He thus spoke about the concept of the “spermatikos logos.” “Whatever good has been found and expressed by philosophers and lawgivers was sought and obtained in virtue of their share in the Logos.”²⁷ “Because all those writers were able to see dimly the beings through the existing (in them) innate sowing of logos.”²⁸ Nevertheless, he did not adopt all that was expressed in the past through reasoning and philosophy inconsiderately. “And because they did not come to know all things about the Logos, who is Christ, they had spoken against themselves at many instances.”²⁹ Justin had no difficulty to call “Christians” those “who lived with logos (reason),” but he accepted Christ as the

²⁶A. Yannoulatos, “Culture and Gospel. Some Observations from Orthodox Tradition and Experience,” *International Review of Mission* 74 (1985) 185.

²⁷Justin Martyr, “Apology,” 2, 10, *Βιβλιοθήκη Ἑλλήνων Πατέρων* Vol. 3, p.205. “Ὅσα γὰρ καλῶς αἰεὶ ἐφθέγγαντο καὶ εὗρον οἱ φιλοσοφῆσαντες ἢ καὶ νομοθετήσαντες, κατὰ τοῦ λόγου μέρος εὐρίσκειαι καὶ θεωρίας ἐστὶ πονηθέντα αὐτοῖς.”

²⁸Justin Martyr, “Apology,” 2, 13, p.207: “οἱ γὰρ συγγραφεῖς πάντες διὰ τῆς ἐνούσης ἐμφύτου τοῦ λόγου σποράς ἀμωδρῶς ἐδύναντο ὁρᾶν τὰ ὄντα.” Compare, Justin Martyr, “Apology,” 2, 8, p.204: “... διὰ τὸ ἐμφυτον παντὶ γένει ἀνθρώπων σπέρμα τοῦ λόγου. . .”

²⁹Justin Martyr, “Apology,” 2, 10, p.205: “ἐπειδὴ δὲ οὐ πάντα τὰ τοῦ λόγου ἐγνώρισαν, ὅς ἐστι Χριστός, καὶ ἐναντία ἑαυτοῖς πολλὰ καὶ εἶπον.”

criterion of the values and theories of one's previous religious life. He concluded his brief reference to the "spermatikos logos" with a basic principle which, strangely enough, is not stressed by those referring to his position. He emphasizes the difference between "seed" (σπέρμα) and the realization of the fullness of life inherent "force" (δύναμιν) and "grace" (χάριν). "Because a seed of something, a type given according to the inherent force is not the same with this, through the grace of which the transformation and copying (of it) is realized."³⁰

Clement of Alexandria (150-215?) returns to this stream of thought, when he speaks of "some sparks of the divine Logos" received by the Greeks; in this way he underlines the possibilities but also the limits that exist.³¹

A very important theological key for our theme is offered by Saint Basil the Great when he extended the notion of "spermatikos logos" to the human possibility "of becoming familiar with the good (ἀγαθόν)." "The love for God is self-taught . . . But at the same time, with the coming into being of living creatures, that is human beings, there is spermatikos logos that is planted within us which possesses from the inside the motive for becoming familiar with the good."³² The vision to see "spermatikos logos," both in human reason and in the capacity for love, opens a new horizon for understanding the people of other faiths.

c) In today's Christian research, the first verses of the Gospel according to Saint John may form the basic Christological foundation for the right understanding of the highest religious inspirations of humanity. In the original it is written: "Ἦν τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν, ὃ φωτίζει πάντα ἄνθρωπον ἐρχόμενον εἰς τὸν κόσμον." The R.S.V. translates: "The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world." Some manuscripts have a comma after ἄνθρωπον, some

³⁰Justin Martyr, "Apology," 2, 13, p.207: "ἕτερον γὰρ ἐστὶ σπέρμα τινὸς καὶ μίμημα κατὰ δύναμιν δοθέν, καὶ ἕτερον αὐτὸ οὐ κατὰ χάριν τὴν ἀπ' ἐκείνου ἢ μετουσία καὶ μίμησις γίνεται."

³¹Clement of Alexandria, "Προτρεπτικὸς πρὸς Ἕλληνας" [Exhortation to Greeks], 7, *Βιβλιοθήκη Ἑλλήνων Πατέρων* Vol. 7, p.55: "εἰ γὰρ καὶ τὰ μάλιστα ἐναύσματα τινα τοῦ λόγου τοῦ θεοῦ λαβόντες Ἕλληνες. . ." Clement thinks that the knowledge of truth in the ancient history of religion comes directly from God; furthermore, he considers it as "προπαιδεία τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ ἀναπαύσεως [a preparatory training for rest in Christ]." — "Στρωματεῖς [The Stromata]" A, 5, *Βιβλιοθήκη Ἑλλήνων Πατέρων* Vol. 7, p.247.

³²Saint Basil the Great, "Ὅροι κατὰ πλάτος [The Long Rules]" *Βιβλιοθήκη Ἑλλήνων Πατέρων* Vol. 53, p.148: "Ἀδίδακτος μὲν ἢ πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν ἀγάπη. . . ἀλλ' ὁμοῦ τῇ συστάσει τοῦ ζώου, τοῦ ἀνθρώπου φημί, σπερματικὸς τις λόγος ἡμῖν ἐγκαταβέβληται οἰκοθεν ἔχων τὰς ἀφορμὰς τῆς πρὸς τὸ ἀγαθὸν οἰκειώσεως."

do not. In the last case we could translate: "He was the true light that enlightens every man who comes into the world." At any rate, this light "enlightens every man."

What defines our subject is the recognition by Christ himself of an astonishing power of faith — of relations between God and man — found among nations, as with the Canaanite woman (Mt 15.21-28; cf. Mk 7.24-30), and the centurion (Mt 8.10; cf. Lk 7.5). In addition there is the extended description given by the book of Acts concerning the piety of Cornelius (Acts 10.1-11.16) and his relationship with God, that existed even before the visit of Peter and also the coming of the Spirit before baptism. The author of Acts points out that Paul explicitly ascertains at Lystra that in previous times "he (God) did not leave himself without witness. . . ." (Acts 14.17); and at the Areopagus (Acts 17.22-31), he proclaims that "he himself (God) gives to all man life and breath and everything. And he made from one every nation of men . . . that they should seek God in the hope they might . . . find him." He adopts even phrases from Aratos (*Phenomena*, 5), in order to underline the truth that "in him we live and move and have our being."

Such a breadth of thought does not lead, of course, to any syncretistic synthesis or to concealing the essence of the Christian message. It is followed, calmly and firmly, by the declaration of the astonishing openings that have been realized in human history and existence by Jesus Christ and his resurrection. This message was completely outside of the ancient Greek cosmotheoretical system and militated not only against a popular and highly intricate polytheism, but also against the refined atheism of the Epicurean philosophers and the pantheism of the Stoics.

Shattering the concept of a closed world system, self-powered and working autonomously and impersonally, Paul brought the message of the action of a personal God, who created the universe for which he provides from a void and intervenes decisively in history. In contrast to the concept of an autonomically functioning world, stress was thus placed on freedom and love, which are activated in a community of God and man, and then of persons living in Christ within the Church. With this paradox, which for the Athenians approached the point of irrationality, Paul proposed a new type of reasoning. He proposed a radical revision of Greek wisdom with the acceptance of two new central points in the course of the universe: that of Jesus and the resurrection.

Until that time, the Greek intelligentsia had based itself on, and limited itself to the concept of man as a thinking being, becoming aware of himself and of his surroundings through the development

of his reason. For Paul, the basic change, the "repentance" of humankind, must take place in a new direction, that of the love of God, which is inaccessible to the mind of man, and which was revealed by the crucified and resurrected Christ.

Here we have a clear example of understanding and respecting old religious concepts and at the same time of transcending them with the power and truth of the Christian revelation.

d) Speaking about christology, many western theologians usually concentrate their attention only upon the earthy life of Christ, from his birth to the crucifixion — upon "the historical Jesus," as they say. But in the east, the emphasis is upon the resurrected and ascended Lord, who will come again, the "Kyrios," the Lord and Logos of the cosmos. The contemplation of the work of the Logos before and after the incarnation, and especially after the resurrection, has been the center of the Christian liturgical experience in the east, with a strong eschatological hope and vision: that "the mystery of his will is to recapitulate (ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι: bringing under the right head) all things (τὰ πάντα) in him, things in heaven and things on earth" (Eph 1.9-10). It is in this divine process, which has cosmic dimensions and also comprises religious phenomena and experiences, that Christ, the incarnate Love, remains the final criterion.

The Church, as the sign and "icon" of his kingdom, is the rallying point of the process of recapitulation. As the life of Christ, the new Adam, has universal repercussions, so the life of his mystical body, the Church, has universal significance and radiance. What the Church is, and what it does, is for the whole world. Its prayers and concerns embrace the whole of humanity. The Church acts and offers the eucharist and doxology on behalf of all men and women. It radiates the glory of the living Lord all over the earth.

The Holy Spirit — "Present Everywhere, Filling All Things"

Lastly, a consideration of the theme of other religions from the view of Orthodox pneumatology can open new horizons for our theological perception. Orthodox theological thought sees the activity of the Holy Spirit very broadly, beyond any definition, description and limitation. In addition to the "economy of the Logos," the Christian east, full of hope and humble expectation, gazes at the "economy of the Spirit."

From the very beginning of creation, the Spirit "was moving over" (Gen 1.2) the chaos until it became the cosmos. The Spirit continued to have the same role in history, although we cannot clearly distinguish the concrete "how" and "where." The Spirit, giver of life, even blows above the fields of dried human bones (as presented in the vision

of Ezekiel (37.14), transforming fields of death into areas of life around the world. The participation of the Holy Spirit is fundamental in the mystery of the incarnation of our Savior and in the birth and life of his "mystical body," the Church. Through Pentecost the glory of God is revealed and manifested in another dynamic way (Acts 2.3).

The manifestation of the presence of the triune God in all the universe and in time and eternity occurs through the continuous energy of the Holy Spirit. "Present everywhere and filling all things" — in the words of the prayer preceding almost all Orthodox services — the Spirit continues to act for the sanctification of all persons and the fulfillment and completion of the whole world: the Spirit of holiness, transferring the breath, love, and power of the trinitarian God to human existence and the universe, the Spirit of power (the rush of a mighty wind and fire were the perceptible symbols of the day of Pentecost), dynamically renewing the atmosphere in which men live and breathe. It is the Spirit who consumes whatever is decayed — concepts, ideas, institutions, customs, demonic structures — and offers new energy for the transforming and renewing of all things in creation: as the "Spirit of truth," working and inspiring human beings in their longing and search for truth — every aspect of truth culminates in the decisive knowledge of the mystery of Christ, who "is the truth" par excellence: as the Spirit of peace, calming hearts and helping to create new relationships among human beings, bringing understanding and reconciliation to the whole of humankind: as the Spirit of justice, giving inspiration and power to yearn and to struggle for justice.

Nothing can put limits on the Spirit's energy. "The Spirit blows where it wills" (Jn 3.8.), as the active force and cohesive power of God's love, working in ways that transcend human thought and concepts. Everything noble and essentially good is an action of the Holy Spirit. Wherever "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control," which are his fruit (Gal 5.22), are found, we may discern traces of the action of the Holy Spirit. And it seems that many such elements are present in the life of many people belonging to other religions.

Theological thinking that can be developed in the direction of pneumatology needs special attention, as well as theological sensitiveness and precision. The terms "ruach," "pneuma," "pneumata," spirit, ghost, are used in the Bible with various meanings and shades; and in many cases it is questioned if they really refer to the Holy Spirit. Moreover, the term "spirits" and their equivalents in hundreds of languages, possess an inconceivable multiformity and many semantic connotations. In our time, also in the

Christian world, they are used to convey a variety of meanings. In order to avoid slipping into vague ideas and acrobatic exercises in theories, Christian pneumatology needs to have constant reference to christological and trinitarian dogmas.

Finally, a significant key for a theological understanding of the good will and acts of every human person can be found in the following thought of Saint Maximos the Confessor: "The God-Logos of God-the-Father is secretly (μυστικῶς) present in every one of His commandments Therefore, he who receives one divine commandment and fulfills it receives God's Logos who is present in it."³³ Of course, one should not forget that these lines belong to ascetical writings and are related to the Christian monastic experience. Nevertheless, one could consider this a theological extension of the biblical concept found in Romans 2. 14-16. We dare say that everyone of good will and intention who keeps the divine commandment of Christ (such as genuine love, humility, forgiveness, selfless service to others), even if he has not had the privilege of knowing directly the ineffable mystery of Christ, secretly (μυστικῶς) receives Christ-the-Logos who is present in the commandment. Since God is love, everything that is an expression of love is a spontaneous tuning into his will and commandment. In the same passage Saint Maximos extends the mystical bond between Christ and his commandments to the Holy Trinity. Because God the Father is absolutely united with his Logos by his divine nature (κατὰ φύσιν), then everyone who has received the Logos through the commandments, has received together with him the Father, who is in Him, and has received together with the Logos the Spirit as well, who is in the Logos. And after making a reference to Jn 13.20, Maximos concludes: "Thus, he who has received a commandment and fulfilled it, has secretly (μυστικῶς) received in him the Holy Trinity."³⁴

I believe that a further exploration of this vision, in relation to Saint Basil's extension of the "spermatikos logos" to the possibility of man "for becoming familiar with the good," and, furthermore, the prolongation of this possibility to the human community, can open new horizons for a theological understanding of the mystery related

³³Maximos the Confessor, "Κεφάλαια περὶ Θεολογίας καὶ τῆς Ἑνσάρκου Οἰκονομίας τοῦ Υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ [Chapters on Theology and the Incarnational Economy of the Son of God]" 2, 71, *Φιλοκαλία τῶν Νηπτικῶν καὶ Ἀσκητικῶν* [Philokalia of the Niptic Fathers and Ascetics] Vol. 14 (Thessalonike, 1985) p. 542: "Ὁ μὲν τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ Πατὴρ Θεὸς Λόγος ἐκάστη μυστικῶς ἐνυπάρχει τῶν οἰκείων ἐντολῶν . . . Ὁ τοίνυν δεχόμενος θεῖαν ἐντολὴν καὶ ποιῶν αὐτήν, τὸν ἐν αὐτῇ τοῦ Θεοῦ δέχεται Λόγον . . .

³⁴Maximos the Confessor, "Κεφάλαια περὶ Θεολογίας" p. 542: "Ὁ γοῦν ἐντολὴν δεξάμενος καὶ ποιήσας αὐτήν, λαβὼν ἔχει μυστικῶς τὴν ἁγίαν Τριάδα."

to lives of people of other faiths. I underline this thesis, hoping to develop it systematically in a future paper.

Concluding Remarks

Summing up my thoughts, I would say that the religious experience of humanity includes both negative and positive elements. On the one hand, there are the degeneration of religious ideas and practices as well as various demonic, dehumanizing structures and forces; on the other, there are some rays of the light of divine revelation. Religions open the horizon towards a transcendent reality, towards something, or someone who exists beyond perceptible phenomena. Offspring of the longing of man for the "Holy" have kept open the door of human experience to the infinite. God's glory extends all over the world. The basic human characteristic, "in the image of God," was not lost, and because of this every human person has remained a receiver of messages of the divine will and radiance of the triune God.

Everybody on earth is moving within the sphere of influence of the "Sun of Justice." One can see several aspects of religions, as if they were "batteries" charged by rays of the divine truth of the "Sun of Righteousness," with experience about life and with various high perceptions and magnificent inspirations. These batteries have helped many on their course, providing them with an imperfect light, or some reflections of light. But they cannot be considered as self-powered, and they have no possibility of substituting for the Sun himself.

The criterion for the estimation and acceptance of the various religious aspirations and principles is for Christians Jesus Christ, the Word of God, who incarnates the love of the triune God. His message of love, with the breadth and depth that is revealed in the Gospel, is the indisputable center, as well as the culmination of all religious experience. The knowledge and experience of this love are realized as a result of the energy of the Holy Spirit. The work of Christ for the salvation of the whole world is continued in time by the Church, which is his body (Col 1.18).

While the Christian attitude towards other religions as systems and organic units has been very critical, we Christians ought to face people who live in the climate of other religions and ideologies with much understanding, respect, and love. This is because every human person, whether man or woman, even if his religious perceptions and beliefs are wrong, has not lost divine origin. Being created in the image of God, every human being is our brother or sister.

I dare say: first, all men and women have a certain relationship with God, accepting some rays of his glory that embrace the universe,

accepting some energies of the Spirit, of life, love and truth. Second, the Church as a sacrament of the kingdom acts on behalf of and for the whole of humanity. Because all human beings participate in common humanity, which has changed radically since the incarnation of the Logos, they receive part of the influence of his grace and love, which are fully activated inside the Church, his body.

Within the process of development of the world which had brought us so near to one another, the obligation of dialogue with people of other faiths is imperative for us Christians. A dialogue, in order to be sincere, presupposes respect towards the personality and free will of the interlocutor, as well as authentic love, understanding and appreciation of the inspirations existing in other religions.

But this disposition for dialogue does not mean suspension of our Christian witness. On the contrary: mission is related to dialogue. While in dialogue, we explain and clarify our witness in a concrete situation. We are obliged to speak and offer the precious treasure which we have as our possession. We cannot be silent about the things that the love of God has revealed and granted to us; about our certainty that he is love and that all men and women are called to share in the communion of love of the trinitarian God. But in order to be persuasive, our witness must draw on our personal life and experience.

What the world is asking for from Christians is not words and theories, but consequences: to show the beauty of the Christian gospel by consciously living its principles under the light of the cross and the resurrection; to reveal in everyday reality the beauty, brightness, glory and power of a life renewed in Christ; and to radiate the presence of the Holy Spirit. The world is longing for a living Christianity witnessing to the mystery of love of the all holy Trinity, and for a deep transformation and transfiguration of human existence and society through this transcendental reality of love.

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Freedom and Personality

PLATON IGUMNOV

PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY, WHICH HAS A RICH TRADITION OF views of the nature of man, and psychological science, which reveals depth in the variety of human behavior, contain much material in which a very broad interpretation of the concept of personality can be found. Such interpretation starts from the concept of personality as a clear noumenon of man, who opens, realizes, and exposes himself in a difficult spiritual-corporal human nature, ending with the concept of personality as a combination of all natural, psychological, intellectual, moral, and creative characteristic features in their interrelation with the environment and the whole spiritual atmosphere and material conditions which surround man.

In theological light, personality is the point of intersection of ontological mysteries. In its very createdness, human personality reflects the non-createdness of God. As God's creation, personality finds itself in the absolute power of God. But in being of God's image, human personality contains the possibility of self-determination in the whole structure and hierarchy of existence and is even free to define its attitude toward God and thus realize and expose itself in the system of orientation and worship. From all this it becomes clear that, for theological interpretation of personality, one of the key categories is the concept of freedom which, on the whole, can be studied at least in three main aspects: God's freedom, creation's freedom, and man's freedom. We think that each of the aspects mentioned relates to a more deepened understanding of the question of "freedom and personality."

Freedom of God

We can speak about the freedom of God using traditional Orthodox theological principles of apophatic and cataphatic theology.

If the apophatic approach makes it possible to discover the complete incomprehensibility of the noumenon of God's freedom, the cataphatic approach makes it possible to speak about the creative power of God and about the ideal, real, i.e., complete and realized freedom of the God-man Jesus Christ who, in his person, exemplified real human freedom.

From the point of view of apophatic theology, freedom of God is a pure concept of reason. The concept of God's freedom is transcendental for human thought; it cannot be the subject of theoretical knowledge. We can in no way show God's freedom as a possibility of choice to act this way or that. God is absolutely free in his being. His being does not depend on anything. The being of God is higher than all human cause-consequence ideas. God simply exists; incomprehensibility of the freedom of God's existence is an axiom of apophatic theology.

From the point of view of cataphatic theology, God is exposed in his performance (*proodos*). Thus, we say that God is free in his creative work. He creates what he wants. But here, the primacy of absolute independence of Divine will is also put forward. Such independence is stressed by the prophets: God decided, and who will decline him? He does what his soul desires (Job 23.13). God acts according to his own will and does not need any human direction. He does not need a human counselor (Is 40.13). All power is given to him in heaven and on earth (Mt 28.18). Everything submits to him: the forces of nature and the elements. He is the Lord of his creation. He even rules the movements of the human heart. Speaking about God's absolute power over creation, Scripture gives the traditional image of a potter who has power over his clay (Rom 9.20-21). The absolute freedom of God reveals itself by his distribution of gifts. His freedom of love is expressed in the parable of the kind owner of the vineyard: "I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?" (Mt 20. 14-15).

God is absolutely free in his providential actions. The holy Church teaches that the coming into the world and redemption of fallen man were done by God voluntarily, absolutely freely.

The freedom of the God-man, the Lord Jesus Christ, appears in two respects: freedom of obedience to the heavenly Father and freedom over natural necessity. The human will of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the will of a perfect man, completely followed the divine will of the Father: "Not what I will, but what thou wilt" (Mk 14.36); "Not my will, but thine, be done" (Lk 22.42). As exemplified in his teaching, acts, and entire life, Christ executed not his will, but the will of his Father, who sent him. In obedience to God the Father, the human

freedom of Christ revealed and exercised itself in all its ideal fullness. Freedom of the God-man over natural necessity exposed itself in his free submission to this necessity. By his endless mercy, God was freely incarnated into the Word, entered the circle and became influenced by certain natural and historical conditions. Having submitted himself to natural necessity, the Son of God thus overcame the limitations of freedom imposed by it. His triumph over the law of natural necessity became realized through his supernatural miracles and his victory over death. The pre-condition of the victory of the Lord Jesus Christ over the law of death was the freedom to follow the will of the heavenly Father. Christ was free to give away his life and free to take it again. Ideal freedom of the Lord Jesus Christ is the metaphysical basis of spiritual freedom of man with respect to God and natural necessity. Assuming the image of Christ and becoming a participant in the Holy Spirit, man receives the basis of freedom: its source and fullness.

Freedom of Creation

Freedom of creation is exposed in its self-expression and self-exposure within the limits of the abilities given to it by God. A creature seeks to expose, express, affirm, and realize itself. Freedom is a universal principle of self-exposure to existence. Possibilities are given to inanimate nature to express itself through form. In the animal world everything expresses itself through individuality. In the world of reasonable creatures, everything expresses itself through hypostases. Inanimate nature and flora of the earth witness a great variety of crystals and vegetable forms forming the basis of mineral and vegetable worlds. The crystalization of substances occurs due to the possibilities which are created by the variety of atomic structures and the emergence of chemical ties. Free variations in the diversity of vegetable forms exist due to the differences in albuminous structures responsible for heredity information. Freedom of behavior in birds and animals is dictated by the possibilities of their constant self-determination with respect to the environment.

Thus, freedom of creation is a necessary condition for the dynamics of its self-exposure. Though it only seems to us that a creature has freedom, this possible illusion comes from the fact that we realize this or that phenomenon in the manifestation of creation, but we often do not realize the cause of the phenomenon. Nevertheless, to explain the world from the point of view of cause-effect conditionally would mean an attempt to impoverish the world, to deprive it of the beauty of poetic perception and the true content of life. In any event, speaking about freedom of creation, we must keep in mind a phenomenon interpreted in the mind of man: liberating creation from absolute

subordination to the law of necessity, man is able to realize to a greater extent his own participation in the gift of freedom which streams from God to the whole world and is ontologically an important attribute of the life of creation.

Freedom of Man

According to N. Lossky's view, freedom is the original characteristic of individual personality. God created personality to be free and filled it with grace, not compulsion. Father Pavel Florenskiy stresses the aesthetic aspect of freedom: everything is beautiful in personality when it faces God, while everything is ugly when it averts God.

Man's freedom is exposed in the self-exposure of his personality. There are two ontological moments in the being of personality by which such exposure is based. The first moment centers on originality and uniqueness of personality, its non-bringing to anything else. Personality, according to A. F. Losey, is original, peculiar, unique, non-being to anything else, and first of all indestructible. The only way to explain the originality of personality is to acknowledge that personality, first of all, is created; secondly, instantly; and thirdly, from nothing. A church dogma stating that man is created in the image of God means that there exists nothing in the whole world that could explain man as personality, in cause-genetic terms, besides the fact that he is created. The second moment centers on the impossibility of personality to exercise its being outside relationships with other personalities similar to it. Thus, while affirming the fact that man is a personality in contact with other people, he must limit his freedom by the freedom of others. Limitation of personal freedom for the benefit of the freedom of another or others means, first of all, acknowledgement; second, respect; and third, care or love of this personality. In acknowledgement, respect, and love towards man, we can see three consecutively increasing levels of spiritual preparedness of personality: acknowledgment is a legal responsibility, respect an expression of ethical-moral culture, and love a manifestation of the care of man commanded by the Gospel.

Bearing in mind the second ontological moment in the being of personality, i.e., the impossibility of personality to exercise its being outside of contact with other personalities, we must state the fact that true spiritual love and freedom are interrelated, and that love in fact does not restrict freedom but, on the contrary, brings liberation to man. Acknowledgement of freedom and moral values of other personalities has love as its source.

Freedom and the Problem of Moral Alienation of Personality

One of the deepest and most mysterious ideological questions, the

problem of evil, is connected with the idea of freedom. Evil is varied in its manifestations. In the ontology of personality, such manifestations of evil as alienation and sin are most important. From the biblical-philosophical point of view, evil existing in the world is the result of the transgression (*paravasis*) of Adam. Man faced the task to affirm himself in the freedom in which he existed. In obedience to God, man had to develop the gift of freedom which he had received from him. But, instead of acting in obedience to God, and concretely in observance of the commandment not to touch the tree of knowledge, an educational meaning, a measure necessary for spiritual ascent, Adam ascribes this interdiction to the jealous will of God to preserve his superiority. Adam thereby shows his disobedience. Man sins to the degree in which his imperfect participation in the freedom freely given is revealed. Thus, sin is a result not of freedom, but of an imperfection in the use of the gift of freedom. Vice versa, victory over sin is a condition of freedom in which man was created by God. If, as has been mentioned, freedom is connected with love and brings liberation to man, the loss of freedom is connected with sin and brings alienation to man. Alienation of personality is one of the most dramatic consequences of the loss of freedom. The phenomenon of alienation of personality is not only the subject of theoretical and philosophical analysis. It is also reflected in descriptions of the inner life of personality in fiction. In a story by the Russian writer V. V. Veresaev, "The Gust," we find an example of such description. We have a hero living through a turning-point in age; he is fifteen. This is a period of development of personality when man forms the logic of a grown person. During a talk with his father, after having broken the will of his parents, he completely and unexpectedly feels hostility towards him. Something "heavy and unpleasant" suddenly appeared in his soul. When he raised his eyes to his father, whose voice sounded "more and more soft and kind," he suddenly felt that, unwillingly and unexpectedly for him, "a cold and angry light broke out in them." The talk ended with a break with his father: "Something incredible and terrible, to which even a name cannot be found, happened." Though he felt himself guilty, an incomprehensible gust wrung from the rude and sullen words at the very end of the talk, "I am not guilty." Veresaev describes a situation of alienation which later plagued his hero, an alienation covering all spheres of the hero's relationships to his environment. Immediately after the talk with his father he "stood motionless," then went slowly down through the garden to the field. His head was "dim," his heart "hung in his breast as a dead lump." The waves went quietly over the golden rye "not looking at him," cornflowers "alienly showed blue" over the boundary,

and "skylarks alienly sang in the sky." His own act seemed incredible to him. Late at night he returned home. The days of loneliness dragged on. Not only everything around him, but even his consciousness was against him. Deep under his consciousness, a vague, obscure force trembled tensely as "a hard spring." And though conscience passed on its blaming sentence, this force became more dear to him than he himself. He irrevocably gave himself up to it, and together with it, went against all the rest.

In alienation, man goes through the agony of consciousness in which he endlessly struggles and strives to affirm his independence from others, yet, at the same time, recognizes an ineradicable need to participate in the lives of others. A "polarized" hero is always rushing about within his own contradictions and reveals a moral-psychological disorder within himself, a loss of something important and vitally necessary. He is symbolically lonely, alien to all; his life is deprived of moral sense. The basis of the inner wretchedness of personality is the break between the essence and existence of man. The phenomenon of man's alienation is fraught with the possibility of deep degradation and complete disappearance of the image of God within him. Alienated from everybody, without love and freedom, man becomes like a fallen angel, a demon: "He did not believe in love, freedom, he looked at everything with a smile." This is a symbol of man alienated from his human essence. Thus, without love, without the creative care of the welfare of neighbors, apotheosis of freedom becomes apothesis of groundlessness and endlessness. This is a tragic dichotomy of the freedom of personality concerning the components contradicting personal status and the striving connected with the will of acknowledgement of this status in this or that environment. High claims of personality come into conflict with its striving for communication. The striving for communication is usually a functional unity of the process of cognition which is manifested in the system of images and emotional conditions. Such is connected with the wish to become a member of a group, to participate in its life, to communicate with it, to enter into contact to help individuals with their need to get help from others, to establish and maintain good inter-personal relations with the tendency to forget injuries, and to forgive faults for the sake of maintaining cordial relations. The higher the status claims are, the greater the striving for mutual communication. In a state of alienation the striving for communication is restrained. At the same time the status claims sharply increase. The resulting gap defines dramatic qualities of the situation of alienation. Along with a suppression of the striving for communication, the possibility of self-exposure of personality as the main manifestation of its

freedom is suppressed.

Freedom and Choice

Human personality is complex, dynamic, and open for different possibilities structurally. Each personality finds itself in the process of growth and formation. Together with the concept of freedom of personality is combined the concept of choice of opening possibilities. The Bible lesson that man, when in paradise, erred, meant, first of all, error in the sphere of value consciousness, illusion as to achievement of divine virtues (axiological aspect), violation of the divine norm, breaking the limits of what is proper (deontological aspect), and loss of the paradise beatitude (felicitological aspect). Freedom of personality presupposes all three aspects of the moral self-determination of man. The problem of value consciousness and value orientation is of major importance for the self-determination of personality. Value consciousness is connected with choice. Man, already early in his life, clashes with the necessity of choice. In a situation of choice, man faces the task of acknowledging the value advantage of one or more motives. Value does not possess compulsory force, but it can give birth to emotions and always presupposes freedom of choice. It can be expected that the quality of emotion depends on the process of formation of personality. In the process of growth and formation of personality, personal values undergo a certain development, changing not only by content, but also by their place and role in the structure of vital activity. Reacting to the emotion created by value and existing in the form of a motive or inducement, man has to make a moral choice. The created motive embraces both sense and will. It comes into conflict with dominating motives and values. The greater the attractiveness of inducement which has emerged in the sphere of consciousness, the more intensive the value of experience will be. Consciousness-state inducement analyzes the situation and evaluates it. In the face of reality of the motive which has emerged with its new value, consciousness is sizing up with its own old values, rethinking its created hierarchy of values and evaluating the quality of the motive which has emerged. If a new motive bears in itself an ideological contradiction to the main principles, ideals, and aspirations of personality, it is discredited in terms of value and rejected by consciousness in principle.

If a new motive in the sphere of consciousness possesses a sum of moments attractive in terms of value, it, having occupied a dominating position in the sphere of consciousness, is transferred to the sphere of feelings and provokes attraction, wish, and desire. Attraction emerges on the basis of feeling dissatisfaction with reality

and provokes wish, in which the future is being planned. Wish turns into desire, in which the ways and means of achieving a wished aim are discussed. The last stage in the realization of choice, the realization of freedom, is the declination of will. Will mobilizes the forces of the soul for the achievement of the aim sought, brings itself to overcome all obstacles, and checks over the common readiness to act. The state of freedom possesses an objective possibility to prefer this or that motive, to make this or that decision, to act this or that way. However, the subject of choice is always man himself, his personality which is opened to different possibilities.

From the moment of Adam's error, choice acquired its dramatic tension and began to presuppose empirically the struggle connected with opposition to the process of personality collapse, a phenomenon trying to gain a foothold in alleged freedom. Not only in the first chapter of the Book of Genesis, but also in both the Old and New Testaments, we find descriptions of the fate of the man who thinks about freedom selfishly. A selfish attitude to the gift of freedom is error and sin, a mistake in the sphere of speculation which leads to a mistake in practical activity. In the ontology of personality, sin is a factor leading to its collapse. The sin of a man who uses the gift of freedom selfishly is a combination of three main components: error in terms of value orientation, violation of the norm in terms of moral consciousness and behavior, and deviation from purpose in terms of divine destination. In terms of value orientation, two moments can be singled out in the content of the structure of sin: passion for alleged good and betrayal of true value. Passion results from the attractiveness of alleged good. Thanks to the dialectical structure of being, the law of reverse correlation between outer attractiveness and inner value exists within certain ontological limits. Attractiveness is the temptation of concealing the possibility of turning to alleged value. Error of choice is contained in the wish for the alleged good. The tragedy of this error is that turning to the alleged good means refusal of the true good, unfaithfulness, and betrayal of the higher value. This distortion of the hierarchy of values takes place. In the case of the alleged good, man exits from his hierarchical rank, sustains a fall, and loses his genuine ontological place in the world. Replacing the highest value with enjoyment of the alleged good, man becomes similar to an unreasonable creature and exchanges the glory of immortal God for images resembling mortal man (Rom 1.23). Choice is, at the same time, a real component, if not the purpose, in the orientation of personality. The prevalence of these or other choices in the system of value orientation forms this or that empirical structure of personality. Empirical structure of personality includes as its content everything which is lived through, acquired, and adopted by each

man during his lifetime. As personality, each man bears in himself the history or experience of his whole life. Experience becomes not only an inalienable quality of personality, but also the content of its nature. In this quality is acknowledged the heritage of personality in eternity. Along with the dogma of "universal resurrection," the Church also includes in her teaching the metaphysical fate of man. This fate is defined in the context of positive or negative property which belongs to individual human personality. Father Pavel Florenskiy says, in his explanation of an eschatological fragment, from the third chapter of the First Letter of the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians, that the Apostle Paul likens the empirical structure of personality to the image of a constructed building. The glory and ignominy of man are defined by the quality of value established by him with respect to the creative formation of his own personality. In Orthodox iconography, which reflects this eschatological enlightenment of the Church, saints and righteous men are depicted in glory, clothed with glory corresponding to the character of their service on earth, while the fallen demons and outcast sinners are depicted in ugly nakedness. "Dressedness" and "nakedness" appear here as mystical-metaphysical characteristics of personality. In the new aeon, incarnation of the personalities of righteous men in Christ, their transfiguration by the Holy Spirit, the fruitless predestination of the lives of sinners, and the absence of positive empirical contents justifying the freedom, choice, and experience of their lives, will be exposed.

Approaching the problem of the value orientation of personality, it is necessary to refrain from overestimating the role of natural determinants capable of determining the degree of this or that choice. Value, not possessing compulsory force, leaves personality freedom of choice. However, its influence upon personality takes place by means of impressions, feelings and wishes. Under normal conditions, feelings, and wishes are a result of the control of consciousness. In the case of a wrong view of the world of perception, feelings and wishes acquire a character of lust and sensual delight. Practical consciousness, which is under a delusion of influences, feelings, and wishes, is the cause of mistake in choice. However, not only practical consciousness but also an emotional state can become the cause of such a mistake. In a state of strong emotional excitement the mind loses its ability to evaluate and control actions realistically, truly, and morally. The most serious mistake in choice is a deliberate bad will which consciously chooses disorder and spiritual damage in one's personal life and the life of one's neighbors. Contrary to feeling, which looks for temporary satisfaction, animosity of will makes personality more gloomy and heavy, as it is more often a constant source of disorder

and evil.

From the point of view of ascetics, the world and flesh are the causes of the majority of temptations experienced by man. But such factors as education and religious formation countervail tendencies of temptation. The Church teaches that personality has considerable freedom in a situation of choice in order to resist the real perpetration of sin. The more deeply and universally man acquires spiritual values, the greater the extent to which each of his concrete choices will correspond to the accomplishment of the main destination of life.

In the course of the formation and perfection of personality, choice loses its tragic tension; all life energy and life sense is asserted in value. For a man who possesses the highest spiritual value, choice is no longer a problem, as he has already chosen his way of life, has found the source of harmony in existence, living, aspiration, and truth, and, thus, has predestined all future choices. Value illuminates from inside the whole of human life, filling it with real freedom and opening its creative abilities.

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Gregory Palamas' Radicalization of the Essence, Energies, and Hypostasis Model of God

THOMAS L. ANASTOS

GREGORY PALAMAS' THEORY OF DEIFICATION, THE IMMEDIATE EXPERIENCE of God by a created being in and through divine grace is spun through the terms and logic of the essence, energies, and hypostasis scheme previously embodied by Palamas' predecessors, for its demonstrated utility in the Trinitarian and Christological debates. For want of a better term, the essence, energies, and hypostasis scheme will be referred to throughout as a conceptual model, a metaphysical explanation of created being appropriately qualified in order to develop a theory of God, or a theology.

The conceptual enhancements Palamas made to the model are a function of the use to which we put it, that being to explain the vertical relationship between God and created being culminating in deification. Palamas radicalized the model in two opposing directions: the theory of deification conceptualized the immediate experience of God by created being, and this in turn provoked the theological restatement of God's transcendence over created being.

Palamas' theology is not a model of clarity, the reason for this being that he theologized true to the apophaticism which serves as the baseline for all Eastern theology. Crispness of concept for Palamas gives way to the ultimate primitive of God's unknowability, setting the stage for a programmed and self-conscious destabilization of theological language.

The Baseline Apophaticism

The baseline apophaticism underlying Palamas' theology is

that God, as uncreated, is beyond all being and therefore incomprehensible and inexpressible.¹ It is a recognition of the deficiencies of created beings' knowledge of and language about God, a recognition from the outset of the restrictions and limitations on theological language. According to Palamas:

Every nature is as far removed as possible from the divine nature, and is absolutely foreign to him: if God is nature, then all other beings are not that; and if any other being different from God is nature, he is not that, just as he is not a being if the others are.²

All language about God is defective to one degree or another because God is outside the world of being and "every concept which strives from below towards the One who transcends all and is separated from all *comes to a halt* once detached from all created beings."³ Palamas goes as far as to say that God so transcends the senses that man cannot possibly model God's characteristics after created beings.⁴

The baseline apophaticism governs the interpretation of the essence, energies, and hypostasis model as employed by Palamas which, like all other conceptual schemes, must not come to a halt once detached from created beings. The model is employed theologically under the proviso that its inadequacy in the face of God's ontological transcendence receive equal billing alongside its intricate conceptual framework. Theological language, while conceptualizing created beings' experience of God, must also call attention to and acknowledge its own shortcomings.

The first imprint of the baseline apophaticism is the distinction between profane knowledge and the true knowledge of God which can be acquired through man's natural faculties with divine assistance. Profane wisdom can be acquired by anyone and its object is exclusively the natural world. No worthy conception of God can be attained through the intellect alone, as true knowledge of God comes from God, leads to God, and conforms to God the one who acquires it.⁵

¹Tr. 1.3.10, 2.3.17.

²*Physical, Theological, Moral and Practical Chapters*, 78, PG 150.1176B. Trans. John Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas* (London, 1974) p. 162.

³Tr. 1.3.18. Gentle translation, p. 35, Italics mine.

⁴Tr. 2.3.5.

⁵Tr. 1.1.3.

The knowledge of God accessible to man through his 'natural eye' is "the apprehension of power, wisdom, and providence of God, and in general knowledge of the Creator through the creatures."⁶ As opposed to profane knowledge, which is a gift of God accorded to all, spiritual knowledge is a supernatural gift accorded only to those who are worthy of it.⁷ A basic fear of God and the form of life which accompanies it—prayer, practice of the commandments, love of God—are the prerequisites to adequate knowledge of divine things.⁸ A spiritual philosopher gains true knowledge of beings, and from such a knowledge the existence of God and his attributes can be inferred.⁹

The positive and negative theology resulting from man's natural faculties with divine assistance is true knowledge of God but, as a result of the baseline apophaticism, Palamas downplays its intrinsic value. Such knowledge is always analogous, as it is mediated through creatures.

Mediate positive and negative theology then can take a distant second to the vision of God:

As the act of submitting to and seeing divine things differs from cataphatic theology and is superior to it, the act of submitting to negation in the spiritual vision, negation linked to the transcendence of the object, differs from negative theology and is superior to it.¹⁰

The light in which man meets God is superior to the light of knowledge, superior even to the light of the Scriptures.¹¹ Similarly, negation, its goal being to remove the mind from the realm of being, is inferior to the vision of God:

But, despite this inexpressible character, negation alone does not suffice to enable the intellect to attain to superintelligible things. The ascent by negation is in fact only an apprehension of how all things are distinct from God; it conveys only

⁶*Tr.* 2.3.15. Translation by Nicholas Gendle (New York, 1983), p. 60.

⁷*Tr.* 2.1.25.

⁸*Tr.* 1.1.7.

⁹*Tr.* 2.3.44.

¹⁰*Tr.* 2.3.26.

¹¹*Tr.* 2.3.18.

an image of the formless contemplation and of the fulfillment of the mind in contemplation, not being itself that fulfillment.¹²

Positive and negative theology are subordinate to the vision of God because God is beyond both knowing and unknowing.¹³

The influence of the baseline apophaticism culminates in the description of the immediate vision of God. While God is knowable through the meditation of creation, mystical "knowledge" of God is the manifestation of God's incomprehensibility. God transcends every intellectual light and the face-to-face encounter with or vision of God is an ineffable experience which surpasses linguistic expression.¹⁴ Palamas admits that he is trying to express the inexpressible, and his choice of language signals his apprehension.¹⁵

The ontological gulf separating God and created being prohibits any direct contact between the two insofar as the created subject's natural senses and intellect are concerned. No created being, be it a man or an angel, can see God through its natural faculties for perception.¹⁶ The uncreated can be seen only by the uncreated, meaning that if a created being is to "see" or "know" God, then its senses and intellect must first be radically transformed:

And what I am to say of this union, only when the brief vision itself is manifested only to chosen disciples, disengaged by ecstasy from all perception of the senses or intellect, admitted to true vision because they have ceased to see, and endowed with supernatural senses by their submission to unknowing . . . their organ of vision was properly speaking neither the senses nor the intellect.¹⁷

Uncreated divine grace is the supernatural "addition" which enables created beings to transcend their normal capabilities. Grace makes the nous divine, "uncreating" it so that raised to the proper on-

¹²*Tr.* 1.3.19. Gendle translation, p. 36.

¹³*Tr.* 1.3.4.

¹⁴*Tr.* 1.3.4.

¹⁵*Tr.* 1.3.19.

¹⁶*Tr.* 2.3.31.

¹⁷*Tr.* 2.3.17. Gendle translation, p. 35.

tological level it is able to receive divine things.¹⁸ The ontological gulf between God and created being is crossed in deification, as the created subject "transcends humanity, is already God by grace; he is united to God and sees God by God."¹⁹

Transformed by grace, the created being's natural faculties are in a state referred to as one of "inaction surpassing action," a divine state which words cannot adequately describe.²⁰ No substantive knowledge of God arises in the union in the divine light, and Palamas concedes that it is 'intelligible' only in a very extended sense of the term.²¹ The union with God takes place beyond both knowing and unknowing, and Palamas notes that it could just as easily be called "ignorance" as "knowledge".²² The light is indescribable and inconceivable; the mind becomes the light and sees by the light, but it is incapable of distinguishing its means of seeing, the object it sees, or the nature of the object.²³

All that clearly arises from the experience of God in the light is the fact that the light is divine, and that it, God, is incomprehensible. The light "bears the mark of the Master" in that it accomplishes the transcendence of created being.²⁴ God's incomprehensibility is first manifest in the inadequacy of mediate knowledge of God, and "in the spiritual vision itself, the transcendent light of God appears only more completely hidden."²⁵ The incomprehensibility of God is more perfectly recognized in the immediate vision of God than it is when God is approached mediately through either symbols, concepts or negation.²⁶

The linguistic twists and juxtapositions to which Palamas resorts while nominally within the framework of explaining the various modes of knowledge of God draw attention back onto the object of the inquiry itself and reveal the commanding influence of the baseline apophatism. That is, "these possessions and gifts are ineffable: If one speaks of them, one must have resource to images and analogies—

¹⁸*Tr.* 2.3.36. Gendle translation, p.66

¹⁹*Tr.* 2.3.52.

²⁰*Tr.* 1.3.19.

²¹*Tr.* 2.3.6.

²²*Tr.* 2.3.33.

²³*Tr.* 2.3.36.

²⁴*Tr.* 2.3.9.

²⁵*Tr.* 2.3.31.

²⁶*Tr.* 2.3.57.

not because that is the way in which these things are seen, but because one cannot adumbrate what one has seen in any other way."²⁷ Spiritual knowledge is marked off from profane knowledge, the object of which is the natural world. Spiritual knowledge, which culminates in mediate positive and negative theology, is then marked off from the vision of God in deification, which is beyond both affirmation and negation because "deification is in fact beyond every name."²⁸ In deification God then appears as an "intellectual light" to the uncreated created subject who is in a state labeled as one of "inaction surpassing action," a state in which the subject 'comprehends incomprehensibly.' As a result of the ontological separation between God and created being, the potential for knowledge of God varies inversely with the intimacy of contact between the two.

The Radicalization Wrought by Deification: Energies vs. Personalism

Deification theory as expounded by Palamas revolves around the essence and energies moment of the model to conceptualize God's inaccessibility and accessibility, but the hypostatic element is always implicitly present. Palamas' theology of "essence and energies" makes sense only within the context of the general scheme of essence, energies, and hypostasis used by his predecessors to model God's Trinitarian existence and the union of God and man in Christ. Palamas was not a radical innovator; he concentrated on and developed the meanings of "essence" and "energies" in relation to God's inaccessibility and accessibility, and the semantical shifts he made are intelligible only within the context of the preexisting theological tradition.

Palamas' methodology of qualifying the familiar technical terms of essence, energies and hypostasis in order to accommodate a theory of deification was in keeping with that employed by his predecessors, the Cappadocians. In short form, Gregory of Nyssa and Basil appropriated the Aristotelian terms essence, energies, and hypostasis, colored them where necessary with platonic hues and recast their meanings in order to conceptualize the unity of the Trinity and the Trinity of the unity. The changes made in converting the triad from a metaphysical description of created being into a theological model included, among other things, that one divine hypostasis can enact one and the same divine essence, that the three divine hypostases

²⁷Tr. 1.3.18. Gendle translation, p. 36.

²⁸Tr. 3.1.32. Gendle translation, p. 87.

share identically the same energies, and that the divine hypostases are differentiated according to their mode of origin rather than through their qualitatively distinct energies. The three divine hypostases enact identically one and the same divine essence and exhibit identically one and the same energies. The hypostases are individuated according to the peculiar mode of origin each has, these modes being a function of the divine essence.

For the Cappadocians the conceptualization provided by the model accounted by the antinomy of the inaccessibility and accessibility of God by saying that man knows and names the three divine hypostases who are God through their concrete energetic enactment of the incomprehensible divine essence, much in the same way that humans come to know and name one another. All attributes of God—his greatness, power, wisdom and goodness, for example—are common attributes of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit rather than attributes of the divine essence.²⁹ Essences are not wise or good. Individual personal beings are, their wisdom or goodness being manifest in their concrete acts or energies.

Gregory of Nyssa's theory of divine names demonstrates the prominent role of the personalized hypostatic element of the model. The attributes of God are personal attributes of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit rather than attributes of the divine essence. The energies of God lead directly to knowledge of the hypostatic subject who together are God—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—the hypostases which are responsible for the concrete energetic enactment of the divine essence. The attributes of God contemplated only in the individual hypostatic subjects, as by definition no essence itself "acts." In the statement "God is a judge," Nyssa says, "we conceive of him some operation judgement, and by the "is" carry our minds to the subject, and are hereby clearly taught not to suppose that the account of his being is the same with the action."³⁰ The Son is called by various names—Shepherd, King, Physician, Bridegroom—but "these titles do not describe his nature, but . . . are concerned with his manifold energies, by which he satisfies the needs of each of his tenderheartedness to his own creation."³¹

²⁹See Basil's *Ep.* 234, PG 32.868C.

³⁰Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomios*, 7.5, PG 45.761C. Translation from LNPF 5, p. 198

³¹Basil, *On the Holy Spirit*, PG 32.97A. Translation by David Anderson (New York, 1980) p. 35.

The divine names signify only the diversity of God's energies, his activities in creating and maintaining the world, and "we are none the more able to learn by our knowledge of his operations the nature of him who works."³² Even the names "Godhead" and "God," Gregory says, are derived from the divine energies.³³

While Cappadocians used a limited essence, energies, and hypostasis model to conceptualize God's noetic accessibility and inaccessibility, Palamas needed more from the triad in order to conceptualize the crossing of the ontological gulf between God and man in deification. In short, he needed an explanation for what grace is, and how it works. The essence and energies distinction provided a mechanism for explaining the vertical movement of man to God, and vice-versa, and, therefore, the intimate and direct contact between God and man.

Virtually all of the elements of Palamas' conceptualization of his vertical movement are apparent in the following:

But you should not consider that God allows himself to be seen in his superessential essence, but according to his deifying gift and energy, the grace of adoption, the uncreated deification, the enhypostatic illumination. You should think that that is the principle of divinity, the deifying gift, in which one may supernaturally communicate, which one may see and with which one may be united. But the essence of God, which is beyond principle, transcends this principle, too.³⁴

The basic principle behind the theory of deification is that God acts in and through the deified individual as the nous is energized or put into action by the divine energies rather than according to the energies defined by the created essence of the individual.³⁵ In accord with the Eastern version of the nature and grace distinction that the fulfillment of created being is its return to its uncreated Creator, Palamas points out that the nous has the ability—naturally, but as a function of divine grace—to transcend itself, to assume the divine

³²Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Holy Trinity*, p.80, par.8, Mercati edition. Translation from LNPF 5, p. 329.

³³*On the Holy Trinity*, p.80, par.8, Mercati edition; *On Not Three Gods*, PG 45.121D, respectively.

³⁴*Tr.* 3.1.29. Gendle translation, p. 84.

³⁵*Tr.* 2.3.24, 2.3.48.

energies as its "natural" activity.³⁶ Deification is a gratuitous state wherein the created subject objectively transcends its ontological level as it is adopted by God and given the status of the uncreated realm: "Those who attain it become thereby uncreated, unoriginate and indescribable, although in their own nature they derive from nothingness."³⁷

The deifying energy is a function of the superessential essence of the Holy Spirit.³⁸ It is enhypostatic, meaning that as an energy having no hypostatic independent existence of its own, it exists as a function of the three divine hypostases insofar as they enact the divine essence, and it exists gratuitously in created hypostases which are given the privilege of 'acting' the divine essence.³⁹

The intimacy of the contact between God and man accentuates the radical nature of accessibility of God in the divine energies and heralds Palamas' departure from the Cappadocians' more limited understanding and use of the energies component. One possible description of the created subject's encounter with God—the description which have followed from the Cappadocians' personalistic understanding of the divine energies—would be that it occurs 'energies to energies' in the same fashion in which all hypostases come into contact with one another. God and man would meet in the manner of a personal encounter between two hypostatic beings of the same ontological stature.

According to Palamas' interpretation of deification, however, it is not merely the case that the deified subject is given to the uncreated realm. Rather with God as the only being who occupies that realm, the deified being is energetically united to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit who enhypostatically dwell in him. The divine energies dynamically act through the 'uncreated' deified subject making him, by adoption, all that God is by nature:

This energy does not manifest itself in deified creatures, as art does in the work of art; for it is thus that the creative power manifests itself in the things created by it, becoming thereby universally visible and at the same time reflected in them. On

³⁶*Tr.* 1.3.45.

³⁷*Tr.* 3.1.31. Gendle translation, p. 86.

³⁸*Tr.* 3.1.8.

³⁹*Tr.* 3.1.9, 3.1.18.

the contrary, deification manifests itself in these creatures 'as art in the man who has acquired it,' according to Basil the Great.⁴⁰

Deification is becoming God, seeing through the eyes of God, rather than more modestly being able to see God though transformed by grace. God is contemplated as the divine energies of the divine form of being are passed on to a created hypostasis. The result is an encounter between God and man such that, still hypostatically distinct, the Trinity and the deified individual are energetically one.⁴¹

The state of "inaction surpassing action" is one in which the natural 'action' of a being—the energies of the being as they are enacted by its hypostasis—are suspended as the divine energies of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are acted through it.⁴² The deified that is "have received an energy identical to that of the deifying essence," without, of course, receiving the divine essence itself.⁴³ The hypostasis of deified individual graciously *acts* the divine essence, theoretically alongside and in harmony with the identical enactment of the divine essence by the three divine hypostases. Uncreated by grace, by the divine energy of deification, the deified individual hears, sees, and comprehends by the incomprehensible Holy Spirit,⁴⁴ meaning that it is able to hypostatically exhibit otherwise energies, such as prophesizing, speaking in tongues, and healing.⁴⁵

Palamas' theory of deification, built on the framework laid by his predecessors, breaks down much of the barrier of mediation between God and created being as the deified subject, while maintaining its created essential and hypostatic elements, is united with God in the uncreated energies. It remains true to the apophaticism, however, as the inaccessibility of God is proserved in three levels. In the first instance, the apophaticism itself dictates the theory's inadequacy, as all language comes to a halt when removed from created being. The drive toward conceptualization is pitted unrelentingly against God's ineffability. Secondly, within the theory itself the

⁴⁰Tr. 3.1.33. Gendle translation, p. 88.

⁴¹Tr. 2.3.36. Gendle translation, p. 66.

⁴²Tr. 2.3.6., 2.3.31.

⁴³Tr. 3.1.33.

⁴⁴Tr. 1.3.18.

⁴⁵Tr. 2.2.11.

inaccessibility of the uncreated realm is preserved by the fact that no knowledge of God results from the unions as the deified nous comprehends incomprehensibly. Finally, and again within the theory itself, the inaccessibility of God is preserved by the radical transcendence of the divine essence, a transcendence which is a necessary reaction to the intimacy of the union in the divine energies.

Radicalization Part 2: Essence vs. Superessence

In conceptualizing the experienced dichotomy of God's mediate accessibility and his absolute inaccessibility, the Cappadocians posited that God is known and named according to his energies, his works in creating and maintaining the created world,⁴⁶ but that the essence of God is inaccessible and unknowable. For Gregory the Theologian God's nature was incomprehensible and illimitable.⁴⁷ According to Gregory of Nyssa, the divine essence "transcends every act of comprehensive knowledge, and it cannot be apprehended or attained by our speculation."⁴⁸ Basil summed up the matter by holding that the divine essence is so incomprehensible that "knowledge of the divine essence involves perception of his incomprehensibility, and the object of our worship is not that of which we comprehend the essence, but of which we comprehend that the essence exists."⁴⁹

According to the logic of the essence and energies model, God's perceived self-manifestation presupposes that the essence of God exists; the self-manifestation marks the essence's existence but does not reveal what it is in itself. The divine energies of the three divine hypostases performed in creating and maintaining the world reveal the identical definite descriptions of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit⁵⁰ and only indirectly manifest the existence of the incom-

⁴⁶Basil, *Ep.* 234, PG 32.869A; Gregory the Theologian, *Or.* 38, PG 36.317B; Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Holy Trinity*, p. 80, par. 8, Mercati edition.

⁴⁷Gregory the Theologian, *Or.* 28, PG 36.32B. Translation from LNPF 7, p. 290. See also Gregory the Theologian, *Or.* 28, PG 36.29A.

⁴⁸Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Beattitudes*, 6, PG 44.1268B; *From Glory to Glory*, trans. and ed. Herbert Musurillo (New York, 1961) p. 98.

⁴⁹Basil, *Ep.* 234, PG 32.869C. Translation from LNPF 8, p. 274. See also Basil, *Against Eunomios*, 1.14, PG 29.544A.

⁵⁰See *Against Eunomios*, 1.14, PG 29.544B, for example.

prehensible essence of God. The idea man has of God, or actually of the identical energies of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit who are God, arises from his (their) operations or energies; the essence which transcends these energies and which is responsible for them remains wholly inaccessible.

Palamas agreed that the essence of God transcends the knowledge of God derived from God's self-exteriorization in his energies and that all God-talk refers to God's energies rather than to his essence. The essence of God is unequivocally unknowable, as God is known and named through the divine energies: "But the divine essence that transcends all names, also surpasses energy . . . and he who is beyond every name transcends what is named according to the same measure."⁵¹ The divine essence transcends all affirmation and negation,⁵² to the extent that the term 'essence of God' is itself misleading. The term "essence" is so laden with conceptual content that it cannot properly be used to indicate the absolute inaccessibility of God, and Palamas in fact went so far as to say that 'essence' when used in respect to God actually designates one of the divine energies, the substantifying one.⁵³

In conceptualizing the vertical movement of man to God as opposed to theorizing regarding knowledge of and language about God, Palamas needed more from the "essence" term than did his predecessors. Conceptualization of deification through the essence and energies distinction required a retrenchment of the inaccessibility of the God in light of the intimacy of contact in the divine energies and the threat of complete ontological confusion. Accordingly, Palamas chose to signify the radical transcendence of the inaccessible aspect of God by qualifying "essence" with "superessential" or replacing it altogether with "superessence":

Thus, neither the uncreated goodness, nor the eternal glory, nor the divine life nor things akin to these *are* simply the superessential essence of God, for God transcends them all as Cause. But we say that he is life, goodness and so forth, and gave him these names, because of the revelatory energies and powers of the Superessential.⁵⁴

⁵¹*Tr.* 3.2.10. Gendle translation, p. 97.

⁵²*Tr.* 3.2.11.

⁵³*Tr.* 3.2.11.

⁵⁴*Tr.* 3.2.7. Gendle translation, p. 95.

The substitution of superessence for essence linguistically dramatized the inaccessibility of God which remains beyond the state of deification. "Superessence" for Palamas denoted the absolutely transcendent, inaccessible, incommunicable, and imparticipable aspect of God which defines the divine being as what it is. The superessential essence of God transcends all linguistic distinctions, including that between being and non-being. Even the primitive uncreated/created distinction would appear to be inoperative beyond the level of the divine energies.

The radicalization of the transcendence of the divine essence in the Palamite theology is a necessary reaction to the pressure applied to the model by Palamas account of the radical nature of God's accessibility in the divine energies. While the Cappadocians asserted the inaccessibility of the divine essence, Palamas' use of the model to account for the intimate contact between God and man required an added layer of protection to safeguard God's inaccessibility. The ontological gap between God and created being is crossed in deification, with the resultant danger that God's inaccessibility would be lost in God's immediate accessibility. The incorporation of the adjective "superessential" into the model creates a new level of inaccessibility which successfully skirts this danger. Conceptually, the term "superessence" designates the radical transcendent essence of God which defines the divine form of being and which is identically enacted by the three divine hypostases. Logically, "superessence" functions as nothing more than a designator for that part of God which is wholly and absolutely inaccessible, the what of God. In deification the ontological gap between created and uncreated realms is crossed via the uncreated divine energies, but beyond this distinction there is something of God which is absolutely inaccessible, designated by the term "superessence."

The superessential essence of God, as the term itself indicates through its meaningless hyperbole, is nameless; God is named on the basis of the "revelatory energies and powers of the Superessential."⁵⁵ Even the name "God" refers to the deifying energy, the result effected by this particular energy being the deification of created being.⁵⁶ That is, "the Holy Fathers affirm unanimously that it is impossible to find a name to manifest the nature

⁵⁵Tr. 3.1.7.

⁵⁶Tr. 3.1.8.

of the uncreated Trinity, but that the names belong to the energies."⁵⁷ The referent of the divine names is God, but not the divine superessence; the divine names refer directly to the divine energies which are immediately a function of the three divine hypostases.

The end result is a sophisticated interplay between the baseline apophaticism and theological language. Negative theology is the movement which runs in opposition to the drive towards conceptualization, a movement resulting from the ontological separation between the uncreated and created being which dictates that all theological language is deficient. God really is not what the divine names say he is. Nor is God what the divine model says he is. God is known and named on the basis of the divine energies, but the ontological transcendence of God has a constant destabilizing affect on this process; positive and negative theology dialectically influence and oppose one another in a movement which mirrors God's inaccessibility and accessibility, a movement which recognizes and accepts the premises of the apophaticism.

The hierarchy of God's noetic, linguistic, and experiential relationship with the created world as sketched by Palamas illustrates the interplay between God's inaccessibility and accessibility. Positive and negative theology are a function primarily of the knowability of God through creation, as God is known and named indirectly according to the results produced by his energies acting in creation. The full thrust of the uncreated/created distinction is operative at this level, as man is wholly unable to penetrate the ontological dimension in which God resides.

God is then directly accessible in the divine energies. The object of the vision in deification is technically inaccessible, in that as created being cannot approach the divine energies. Deification requires the "uncreation," and is beyond sensation, intellection and all forms of knowledge. The divine light transcends all beings,⁵⁸ or, as Palamas equates the two, all "created things."⁵⁹ The deified subject 'sees' the divine light to the extent that the subject is "uncreated," but no knowledge follows from this state. God's noetic accessibility decreases as his experiential accessibility increases.

⁵⁷*Tr.* 3.2.10. Gendle translation, p. 97.

⁵⁸*Tr.* 1.3.28.

⁵⁹*Tr.* 2.3.66.

There is, however, a third level to the hierarchy which signifies God's absolute inaccessibility, a level which technically transcends and exists even beyond the uncreated/created distinction. The superessential essence of God transcends the inaccessibility and accessibility of the divine energies. "God" and all of the rest of the divine names refer to the three divine hypostases based on the divine energies. The name "God" itself refers to the deifying energy. The divine superessence, however, is "more than God," more than the energetic revelation of God, existing beyond all affirmation and negation.⁶⁰ God is both "God," the sum of the names attributed to God based on the divine energies, and "more than God," the superessential divine essence.⁶¹ There is a not-being by transcendence which is accessible to created things when they are uncreated, a not-being which is *not* the divine essence; the superessential essence of God logically transcends even this not-being.⁶²

The inaccessibility of God dominates or at least counterbalances God's accessibility, even given the intimacy of the contact with God in deification. The knowledge of God expressed in positive theology is inadequate, and negative theology—the creation of a void—is inferior to the real presence of God. When created being crosses into the uncreated dimension, it experiences both the immediate presence of the God and God's incomprehensibility. Beyond this, however, there still lies the hypertheos, the "more than God," the absolutely inaccessible superessential essence of God.

⁶⁰*Tr.* 2.3.8.

⁶¹*Tr.* 3.1.31.

⁶²*Tr.* 2.3.37.

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Introduction

LEWIS J. PATSAVOS

IT IS WITH MUCH JOY AND SATISFACTION THAT THE PRESENT VOLUME commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of Holy Cross School of Theology has at last been prepared for distribution. The volume contains, for the most part, the papers delivered at the Third International Conference of Orthodox Theological Schools convened from August 30-September 4, 1987, at Hellenic College/Holy Cross in Brookline, Massachusetts.

The faculty of Holy Cross took great pleasure in hosting this event. It was a rare opportunity for colleagues from twenty-two sister Orthodox schools of theology in fifteen lands to meet and dialogue. In this way, not only was the cause of inter-Orthodox dialogue served thereby, but also that of pan-Orthodox unity. In view of the fact that Holy Cross School of Theology exists to assist the Church in her sacred mission and witness, the school was honored to serve in this capacity.

This conference was a momentous occasion which took place in a world quite different from that of today. The Church at that time in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union did not enjoy the freedom it does now. This in itself enhances the significance of the event, because it reveals aspects of the theology of a church under oppression. From the content of several of the papers, in fact, it is evident that some of the speakers were compelled to serve as the mouthpiece of their governments.

Several practical difficulties contributed to the considerable delay in the completion of this project. What might otherwise have been accomplished with facility was accompanied by obstacles. Not the least of these was the task of gathering the manuscripts contained herein. Another was the actual editing of the papers, the majority of which were written by persons whose native tongue was not English. The fact, however, that so many participants in the conference claimed

a language other than English as their native tongue, also brought with it a definite advantage. On the one hand, it projected the international character of the conference, and on the other, it convincingly expressed the catholicity of Orthodoxy.

The theme of the conference, "Icon and Kingdom," celebrated the 1200th anniversary of the Seventh Ecumenical Council held in Nicaea in 787. This was the council convened to put an end to the Iconoclastic controversy. It declared its adherence to the doctrine regarding the veneration of images, adding that they are honored with a relative cult. Absolute adoration, on the other hand, is reserved to God alone, whereas the honor given to the image is directed to its prototype.

The theme was conceived as an ideal starting point for reflections on theological issues facing Orthodoxy at the dawn of the twenty-first century. Several topics emanating from the general theme are addressed by the papers arranged by and large in the order in which they were delivered at the conference. These topics come under the headings "Kingdom and Society," "Kingdom and Church," "Kingdom and World," "Kingdom and Person," and "Aspects of the Seventh Ecumenical Council."

In addition to the papers which appear thematically, this volume contains several of the meditations delivered at the daily worship services. The entire collection is preceded by a chronicle of the conference.

Assisting in the tedious task of proofreading and editing were several persons whose invaluable contributions cannot be overstated. Among the first to be named for quality of work and length of participation in this effort is the Rev. Michael Pappas. Others include the Rev. Dr. George Christulides of blessed memory, Presbyteria Kerry Pappas, and Fr. Stelyio Muksuris. Contributing also to the completion of the project, in varying degrees of involvement and in various capacities, were the Rev. John Bacon, Presbyteria Emily Harakas, and Dr. Demetri Demopoulos. There were others besides, students as well as colleagues, who lent their services, each in his or her own way, during the different phases of the project.

A special word of thanks is hereby expressed to His Eminence Archbishop Iakovos, Primate of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America, whose commitment to theological study and research made this entire endeavor possible. It was he who at the Second International Conference of Orthodox Theological Schools held in Athens in 1976 promised to host the next conference in Brookline. True to his word, he was mainly responsible for enabling the present event to become a reality. For his inspired archpastoral

leadership throughout the past thirty-four years and his continued encouragement of scholarly pursuits toward excellence, this written acknowledgement is made.

Finally, this publication would not have been possible without the approval and support of His Grace Bishop Methodios of Boston, President of Hellenic College/Holy Cross, and the Rev. Dr. Nomikos Michael Vaporis, editor of *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review*. In recognition thereof, this word of deep appreciation is expressed.

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Loving God—A Woman's Service in the Church

EFTHALIA MAKRIS WALSH

AS I BEGIN MY TALK ON WOMEN AND THEIR SERVICE—*DIAKONIA*—IN the church, I want to emphasize what everyone here this morning knows—the enormous contribution women have made. I don't think I am exaggerating to say that the church in this country, would not be what it is today, but for women.

I make a particular point of this because, looking at St. Andrew's anniversary publication a few years ago, I was struck by the fact that very few—if any—women were listed as founders and benefactors of the church. Yet in my recollection, growing up in South Bend, at Saint Andrew's Greek Orthodox Church, South Bend, Indiana, women were the most visible and instrumental people in the parish. For it was women who taught us in Sunday School classes, rehearsed us for recitations and performances at parish celebrations, prepared the food, and performed prodigies of fundraising as well. It was women who organized and sang in the choir, brought their children to church, and often dragged their husbands to worship.

Today, Orthodox women are still involved in the same enterprises. Married and single, widows—all shapes, sizes, women continue to serve the church, their families, and the larger community in which they live.

But many things have changed. We are no longer an immigrant community of often poorly educated women, uprooted from their homeland, with limited knowledge of English, struggling to survive in an alien land. Greek Orthodox women are, as a group, well educated

*A paper read at Saint Andrew's Greek Orthodox Church, South Bend, Indiana.

and privileged, blessed with the fruits of their parents' and grandparents' faith and devotion to the Church, and with their success. But with this privilege has come an even greater challenge on this eve of the twenty-first century, how to continue this devoted service to Christ and his Church using these gifts—God's gifts—and their talent wisely?

Maybe it is appropriate here in the vein of "advice from one's mother" to recall a comment mine made some twenty-five years ago when I asked her what she thought about the liturgical use of English—a topic under discussion at the time. And her sage response: "Whatever we knew and were able to do for the Church, we did, Now you must do the same." Incidentally, my mother was then the age I am now. And it reminds me that as I speak, my contemporaries and I are in some ways passé—already there is a new generation with new hopes, new aspirations, new energies, and new problems. As my mother wisely said, every generation has its problems and they must solve them.

The great changes of the last decades and the success of our people has often made us forget the path to Christian virtue that the Church asks us to follow requires great physical, mental, and spiritual effort. Of course, there is a problem in knowing how to serve. In the years I've taught in my church, Saint Sophia in Washington, D.C., I've been constantly reminded of how shallow our knowledge is of her tradition. We know a lot of things, but we know little about our faith. But having correct knowledge about the Church has never been as important as it is now. The Church, once again, as she has often in the past, calls for defenders.

The Church is under attack today. Whether we like it or not, many people see the Greek Orthodox Church as reactionary, archaic, out of touch. The feminist accusation that the Orthodox Church has a patriarchal outlook and masculine concerns, has been widely disseminated—even by people within the Church. They claim the Church has historically suppressed women. And they blame the Old Testament Genesis account of Adam and Eve as establishing and preserving an anti-female, mentality in the Church. The influence of these modern critics has permeated our universities and the society as a whole.

Even our young children are aware of these discussions. I cite

for example, a letter in a fall issue of *The Orthodox Observer*, where a thirteen year-old Orthodox girl from Stockton, California, accuses the Church of being paternalistic. The fact that the only way women are allowed into the sanctuary is to clean it, is demeaning, she says. And she advocates that women be ordained and fill the empty altars. What should we say to this?

The answer is that the tradition limiting the priesthood to men was handed down from the Apostles to us and it probably will not change. But if it does, first, people must be prepared and ready to accept the change universally and secondly that it must become a law of the Church at an Ecumenical Council. However, there is currently serious discussion on the restoration of the diaconate for women which would allow women to serve in that capacity and young women as altar girls.

But it is not only thirteen-year-olds who make such accusations. Concern about the Church's attitude toward women is being raised by college-aged daughters and sons. Listen to what they are saying, listen to what the non-Orthodox and Orthodox mates your children marry are saying about the Church. Let's take these comments seriously.

Now, I want to make perfectly clear that I'm not advocating that women be ordained. I personally find the historical fact that the Church did not ordain women to the priesthood a compelling argument. And for me that is enough of an explanation.

I refer to these issues on women and their place in the Church and society, because they are being raised with a vengeance by our younger people.

Orthodox lay women and men must know what the Church has taught about women, and men, why, where, and when and by whom. We are woefully ignorant of this tradition.

And as we all know, what distinguishes the Orthodox Church is its loyalty to its holy tradition—and its trust in this tradition as its guide. We must have a ready defense drawing on that tradition—a considered informed and welcoming response. Not only theologians and priests, but all believers, male and female must know.

I speak from my own experience, because when I married a non-Orthodox, some thirty-five years ago, I had to think of my faith in a new context. Today most marriages in the Church are to non-

Orthodox. We must do a better job of bringing them into our faith than we've done in the past. This is a critical issue.

So the question is how we become more knowledgeable, more prayerful, more willing and able to discourse and to witness to what we believe—not to impress people, but to enrich ourselves and communities spiritually, and to discover how best to serve God as defenders, evangelizers and preservers of our faith.

Let's be certain about one thing. We have nothing to be ashamed of when it comes to women and sexuality in the Orthodox Church and much to be proud of. We have a rich tradition and record documenting the importance and high valuation placed on women in the Church and in society. After some ten years of intensive study of the first 500 years of the early Church, I am impressed by the feminine presence and more important of the centrality of women in the mission of the Church—the salvation of mankind. Christ spoke very directly and lovingly to women. The Church, his bride, and our mother, has continued in that tradition. It has been adaptable, and durable and we can learn much from it.

Our holy tradition—theological, liturgical and spiritual—is rooted in the full equality of women with men. The anti-female, anti-sexual, anti-body perspective that we are accused of is antithetical to everything that is basic to our Orthodox Christian faith.

My own experience, as a writer, a theology student at a Protestant seminary and a Roman Catholic university, a teacher, and Archdiocesan and Philoptochos representative to ecumenical groups, has made me see how easy it is—and how dangerous—to let others tell you what your Church believes and teaches. I don't mean to sound anti-ecumenical, but it is rather ironic that we permit ourselves to be labeled misogynist by Protestant denominations which since the Reformation era have virtually ignored women in their tradition and teaching. And the Roman Catholics, too, have offered on the whole, a restricted anti-sexual perspective on marriage and women.

What I want to do now is to explore that tradition with you. And to show the many women's roles and the diakonia that they have performed in our Church's sacred history. In today's world of equal rights and opportunities, the word diakonia and service have a derogatory connotation. But in the language of the Church we are all *diakonoi* and *douloi*—servants of God— and it is a glorious responsibility to

imitate the life and behavior of Lord, who out of his love for mankind, became a human being and sacrificed himself so that we might live.

Women have been among the first in their love and diakonia to God from the beginning of the Church. From the Panagia, first chosen and worthy to bear God, to Mary Magdalene, equal to apostles, first chosen to witness the resurrected Christ. With respect to the Adam and Eve story, church tradition gives women and the Panagia, especially, the credit for turning away from the old evil ways and starting the new Christian pattern. The Panagia is depicted in many of our hymns and services as the new Eve, one whose actions void, repudiate, and supersede those of the original Eve. The line of thinking will be familiar to you. The virgin Eve listened to the word (of the serpent) and was led into disobedience and death; the new virgin, Mary, listened to God and in her obedience gave birth to the Word, and led us to everlasting life.

Our church tradition and history offers us countless examples of women saints from Old and New Testament times and later, who themselves followed this new pattern and way of life and led others to it. When one considers the restricted roles that pre-modern societies offered women, the range of activities the saints engaged in is truly remarkable. Orthodox women of virtue and wisdom exhibited qualities of unconditional love and devotion expressed in their lives as mothers, wives, widows, spiritual guides and teachers, deaconesses, healers, protectors of orphans, the sick, the poor and downtrodden, evangelizers, converts of pagans and unbelievers, and many other areas. And the Church has unstintingly glorified them.

It is true that some extreme ascetic writers in the history of the church have disparaged the female sex. But these are not dogmatic teachings of church belief, but exaggerated exhortations to people to refrain from sinning. In some cases, they are simply rhetorical flourishes used often in pagan Greek and Roman, and Jewish literature, which made points of the perceived weakness of women—for example their love of clothes, make-up, jewelry, and other luxuries, etc. Some are the kind of jokey, if objectionable, comments made about women, daily on TV sitcoms and in other walks of life, including medical and law schools and practice. And let's face it, people do silly things at times and the church writers chastise them for that, too. Many of these writings are homilies and sermons comment-

ing on daily life.

But let me back up and be specific about the fundamental truth of the Church with respect to gender: what the church has taught and will continue to teach about men and women.

Much of the material I have drawn on is from the Patristic writers who more than any other theologians shaped the theology and thinking of our Church. Having spent the last few years immersed in the writings of the period, the subjects and people written about have come to life for me, and especially those of Saint John Chrysostom, whose views on women and marriage are the subject of my doctoral dissertation. Chrysostom had been a deacon, priest, and eloquent preacher for more than fifteen years in Antioch, when he became archbishop and patriarch of Constantinople in 397, a time of continuing church turmoil. These theologians were not just scholars sitting in their monastic cells, but actively involved and concerned with the lives of their parishioners, the running of the Church, and in defining and defending the major dogmas of the church. Marriage, sexuality, and the role of women were major issues of their time and important church battles were fought over them.

From these writings we can learn that there is nothing second class about the treatment women receive at the baptismal font, nor the eucharistic table, nor at the "fearsome judgement seat of the Lord," as the liturgy warns us. Our baptismal hymn is unequivocal that men and women are spiritually equivalent "All who have put on Christ are baptized in Christ. ... In Christ there is no Jew, nor Greek, no male or female, etc." Men and women alike are made in the image and likeness of God. Gender distinctions had and have no place in the salvation promised us by the Church and the Church has been adamant about this. And our tradition is full of examples maintaining the *homoioteta*, the sameness of being, and *homotimia*, the sameness of honor, merit, nature, glory, etc.

Saint John Chrysostom goes to some lengths to explain that John the Evangelist's comment (Jn 1.12), "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become sons of God," does not refer simply to males. "Whether bond or free, whether Greeks or barbarians or Scythians, unlearned or learned, female or male, children or old men, in dishonor or in honor, rich or poor, rulers or private persons—all, he says are deemed worthy of the same privilege. For faith and the

grace of the Spirit, removing the inequality—*anomalian*—caused by worldly things has molded all to one form and has stamped them with one impress—*charaktera*—the King's."

When women are spoken of as having different qualities than men, in these sacred writings, what is most striking is the depiction of women as great lovers of God. Saint John Chrysostom, for me, singles them out for this quality and others. "Women surpass men in their solemn dignity—*semnoteta*, their fervency, their devotion—*eulavia* (which means holding fast) their love for Christ." Elsewhere he notes in detail the great spiritual achievements of women, adding that men so often fall behind. In another work, he comments on the particular quality of feeling, "Full of feeling somehow, is the female sex—and more inclined to compassion."

He gives the highest marks for the outstanding *ἐλεημοσύνη* of women, that is their charity and almsgiving and concern for the needy. This is high praise, indeed, because for Chrysostom, the "Ambassador of the Poor," as he has been called, *ἐλεημοσύνη* rates as the highest virtue without which one could not enter the kingdom of Heaven, however praiseworthy they might otherwise be.

In many of his other works about women, he speaks of another major virtue they exhibited—*sophrosyne*, that is soundness of mind, moderation, discretion, or moderation in desires, self-control, temperance. A modern classicist has defined this word as meaning something akin to the two great delphic sayings "Know thyself," and "Nothing in excess." *Sophrosyne* is the exact opposite of arrogance, insolent self-assertion. It means accepting the bounds which excellence lays down for human nature, restraining impulses to unrestricted freedom to all excess, obeying the inner laws of harmony and proportion.

I cite Saint John Chrysostom so extensively because his practical theology has been so incredibly influential on subsequent Church tradition. There are more manuscripts of his works than of any other Father. They are copied and read throughout the centuries even by non-Orthodox, like Martin Luther and Saint Thomas Aquinas, who claimed he'd rather have all of Chrysostom's homilies on Saint Matthew's gospel than all of Paris. I am going into such detail because I d' like to refute—and for you also to refute—the recent critics outside, and even inside, the Church who claim that Chrysostom was a

misogynist—a woman hater. If it is the only thing you remember from my remarks today, I hope it is my vehement denial and even denunciation of that assessment. It is completely anachronistic to blame the Church and people of ancient society for their practices and attitudes and expect them to think and act like people of today.

No single theologian of our Church has written such a vast quantity of work that is so positive about women, and about the goodness of sexuality and marriage, as did Chrysostom. His work merits a close reading and rereading by our generation, and it is being translated by our Orthodox presses. Bible study classes should read and discuss the Bible with Chrysostom's biblical commentaries in hand.

And if we are Greeks, it is because of him and the other Greek church theologians that I shall mention. Their ideas have shaped our Church for the past 1600 years.

Let me speak now of the strong identification of women with the love relationship as a central idea pervading church worship services. And these are the most familiar to everyone—the Holy Week Services which feature Christ as the Bridegroom and the parable of the ten virgins who hope to enter the bridal chamber—services in which the dominant metaphor is feminine. “I see thy bridal chamber adorned, O my Savior, and I have no wedding garment that I may enter therein; O Giver of Light, make the vesture of my soul and save me.”

And there is also extensive use of the bride and bridegroom metaphor in the spiritual writings of the Church which depict the individual soul—and the Church as the bride.

Of course, these passages and the many thousands of similar ones which deal with the marriage theme, are not intended only for females. In explaining the use of the feminine metaphor in such passages, Saint Gregory of Nyssa, known as the “Father of Fathers” says “No one can adequately grasp the terms pertaining to God. For example, mother is mentioned in the place of father. Both terms mean the same. There is neither male nor female in God . . . when we are one in Christ, we are divested of the signs of this difference. . . .” And he goes to develop these themes of loving relationship to God in the context of a marriage and sexual metaphor for those who enter Christ's bridal chamber and banquet.

The great familial and maternal presence of God is also expressed in the services and devotion to the Theotokos. Our Good Friday

services, for example, poignantly elaborate on the Panagia's great maternal love for Christ "Oh my sweet springtime, my sweetest child, where has your beauty fallen. . . . Oh, Light of my eyes, my beloved Child how art thou now hidden in the grave . . . I glorify you, oh my son; because of your deep compassion you suffer these things . . ." And the theme of the Church as our loving mother, as well as virgin, is also a dominant theme throughout our Church writing.

Chrysostom's large body of work about marriage, sexuality, and family also offers ample evidence that the Church never considered women inferior beings and that married men and women had the same potential for salvation as ascetics—a big issue at the time. Chrysostom makes explicit that the Church regarded marriage as the primary manifestation of the unity of humankind. His depiction of the family as a church is an indicator of the stress he put on the harmonious, sanctifying relationship of husband and wife. And he says husband and wife together are made in the image and likeness of the Holy Trinity. No church writer has written as forcefully about the sacramentality of the sexual relation in marriage, and the great potential for conversion of the non-believing spouse by a faithful wife. His repeated concern and extensive guidelines for the Christian rearing of children is remarkable and applicable today.

Chrysostom also presents detailed depictions of the model biblical married women, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, Anna, and Solomina, in his numerous homilies on these women, homilies and examples written for the women of his time that can serve as paradigms for us also, so that we, too, can live lives of holiness. Their wisdom, faith and loyalty to God surpassed that of their husbands, the Old Testament patriarchs. He lauds Anna who promised and gave her son Samuel to the service of God, and Solomina, the Maccabean mother who saw her seven sons martyred for their refusal to deny their faith in God.

Saint Gregory the Theologian also tells us of the outstanding diakonia of married women. His mother and sister, Saints Nonna and Gorgona he describes as spiritual guides and teachers and fully equal to their husbands. And he presents a truly equalitarian model for Christian marriage. His father, who became a bishop, was a pagan when he married Nonna. She was instrumental in his conversion and led him and all who knew her to spiritual perfection and virtue. And his sister, Gorgona, too, Gregory says is a figure of great wisdom "who

surpassed in her intellectual fortitude not only women, but the most brilliant men, and in her intelligent chanting of the psalms, in her reading, explanation, and timely recollection of the divine oracles." Gregory knew from his own experience that it is women who most often convert their husbands and children to the faith.

Widows are another category of women Church theologians rated highly. Chrysostom speaks of them as the highest exemplars of how we should lead a Christian life. He had a special sensitivity to widowhood and its implications since his mother was widowed at a very young age. He calls widows patrons—*prostates*—of other Christians with special access to God. And he ranks their service to the Church as equal to, and sometimes surpassing that of the priests. He notes that the requirement for being enrolled as a widow was even stricter than that for becoming a bishop. The Old Testament widow of Serapetha of Sidon, and the New Testament widow of Luke who gave her last two coins to the church collections for the poor are referred to many, many times throughout his work—more than any other example of Christian piety.

Both Christian and pagan sources reveal how important this charitable activity of Christian widows was considered by the people of that time. They believed that the truth and veracity of a religion was proved by the kinds of lives its practitioners lived. Widows were living example that the Orthodox Christian faith was the best.

Especially noteworthy was the widows' hospitality to strangers the rearing of their own orphaned children and other abandoned and orphaned children, their care for the poor and downtrodden and their love and devotion to God. Most of these widows were poor. Other wealthier widows, like the deaconess Olympia, Chrysostom's great friend and supporter, established hospitals and homes for virgins who had no other source of support, and they otherwise served the poor and infirm. The order of deaconesses began to flourish in the late 4th century and these women played the kind of roles I have mentioned. Chrysostom regarded highly the institution of deaconesses and thought it to have originated in apostolic times. They were his staunchest allies and helpers in his years as Archbishop of Constantinople, and interceded on his behalf during his exile. Much modern comment has focused on the liturgical role these women played, but it seems to me that their major responsibility was in the philanthropic

and teaching areas.

Another similar example of loving service to the Church is Makrina, the ascetic sister of Saint Gregory of Nyssa. Her spiritual teaching and Christian philosophy greatly influenced him and his brothers, among them St. Basil the Great. Her life of prayer and chanting in the Church, her rearing of abandoned children and support of widows and her healing powers, Saint Gregory describes with great emotion. These are not simply eulogies of favorite family members. They were written to instruct and to guide people in an era when women had little status, power and authority in the society, but a great deal in the Church.

The martyrs glorified by the Church also offer us plenty of insight and inspiration for emulation. Through them Christianity was spread through the empire and the world. Thekla, Catherine, Irene, Barbara, and numerous others, women of the ruling class, wealthy, well educated, leading a life of intellectual and spiritual combat with the forces of destruction, resisting marriage to pagans, arguing with the greatest philosophers of the time about the merits of their faith and winning by converting thousands of people.

But the saints weren't all wealthy, educated and eloquent, nor engaged in charitable ventures. The women neo-martyrs of the Turkish period, for example, were simple peasant girls whose sanctifying behavior was that they would not marry or be seduced into sexual liaisons with Muslims. And though tormented to death, they held firm to their mother's teachings that they not betray Christ and renounce their Orthodox Christian faith. It may sound strange that not marrying a Muslim could make one a martyr, but it was not insignificant to the Church of the eighteenth century whose monks and intellectuals had earlier fled the Ottoman onslaught to the West, and left the Church in the hands of the poor and faithful, many of them illiterate women. The Church has recognized them and glorified them for their loving contribution in perpetuating our faith.

And the ascetic Mother Mary of Egypt, the repentant prostitute, honored during the Lenten period, who knew nothing of the Bible and hymns, as her biographer Zosimos tells us, but received the grace of God through the Holy Spirit and Holy Communion. She was glorified for her repentance and her radical withdrawal from her sinful life. A model for all, and especially those of us addicted to destruc-

tive patterns of life.

And the women of our own parishes that I mentioned before, who left their homeland and families, many never to return again, will be glorified. And the women of our great philanthropic society, the Philoptochos and here in South Bend, the Good Samaritans. They are the evangelizers, the missionaries, the lovers of Christ and the defenders of our faith, in the home, the Church and society. There is nothing second rate about how the church has described, honors and reveres these women, these wise virgins, mothers, widows, and brides of Christ.

But while we study and understand the past, let us be aware that the church has offered these models and ideas as a guide to the future and for our salvation. And let us keep in mind the warnings of some women graduates of Orthodox seminaries that "the Church today not have an ambivalent attitude that . . . disregards or minimizes the witness and experience of women's encounter with and relationship to God." and that "we not remain in the kind of frozen spirituality in which we follow things that never were the Holy Spirit."

Let us seriously consider their comments, because if they are at all applicable to the status of women in the Church today, well that is definitely not in the holy tradition of the Greek Orthodox Church.

In concluding, I would like to briefly review my remarks. I have spoken of the positive theology of femaleness and sexuality the Church has espoused. And I have noted that our worship services are greatly attuned to a female experience and ethos. Finally, I have reviewed, the ways women have served the Church in their *leitourgia* as wives and mothers; often converting their husbands and families and teaching the faith in their homes—making the home a small church, as Saint John Chrysostom expressed it.

I have noted how vital a role married women, widows and virgins played in perpetuating and defending their faith through their teaching and philanthropic efforts, both in the Church, which as the body of Christ is our larger family—and to the greater community in which we are increasingly involved as evangelizers. The task of love, the *diakonia* that faces Greek Orthodox women in our parishes today, must be more of the same—much, much, more of the same. Women have always responded to this challenge and God willing they always will.

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Man as the Icon of God

MATTI SIDOROFF

IN THESE DAYS WE HAVE MEDITATED AND SPOKEN MUCH ABOUT ICONS. In our worship they have a central place. We have a direct and close relation to them. They are dear to us Orthodox. But the icon is not just an object, external to us. It is that, too, but we should remember that we ourselves are called to be icons of God, because God created us in his own image and likeness.

We know that the fall of man distorted the image in which we were created. We do not present a good icon. People looking at us do not see in us the presence of God because we present a distorted icon, stained by many sins. And even though we try very hard to be better, to present a better image, we may not succeed. The icons we paint, the sermons we preach, the instruction we give may not convey the divine presence. The fallen image of God is reflected in everything that the fallen man does or creates for his part.

But this is not the only thing we know. We also know and firmly believe that Christ, the Son of God, has come and restored the distorted image of God in us. It is this fact alone which enables us to do something good, for instance, to paint good icons, to celebrate divine services, to preach good sermons, etc. It is these things among others that convey the presence of God among us. We do not have the means to "produce" the divine presence in our midst, no matter how hard we try. It is Christ himself who does it. Therefore, we have to give way to him. It is he whom we have to give a chance to act in us. It is he whom we have to let live in us. We have to be like Saint John the Baptist who said of Christ: "He must increase, but I must decrease" (Jn 3.20). Or like Saint Paul who said: "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Gal 2.20).

The act of giving ourselves to Christ should not be difficult because this possibility is given to us freely and we have it at our disposal

continuously, if we only take our baptism seriously. At that occasion we were given the gift of the Holy Spirit. We were anointed with Chrism. We were made "christs" at that moment. Speaking of Jesus Christ we use a capital "C" but speaking of our own anointment the small "c" is enough. However, the subject matter is the same: "It is no longer I who lives, but Christ who lives in me."

It is the same Holy Spirit that descended upon Christ and upon the apostles, whom we also received at our baptism and chrismation. Therefore, we know that we did not receive the Spirit just for that one passing moment of our life. The Holy Spirit does not just come and go, he comes to stay, to abide in us. Saint John the Baptist testifies how he saw the Spirit descending and *remaining* on Jesus (Jn 1.32). Saint Luke in Acts likewise tells how the Holy Spirit in the form of fiery tongues remained resting on each one of the apostles (Acts 2.3). In the same way he wants to rest on us and abide in us. And by doing so he makes Christ, the Son of God present to us and in us, to grow in us and to take the place of "I."

Christ once said that he came to the world to bring fire (Lk 12.45). The Holy Spirit is that fire which should make us burn. This means, of course, sacrifice. In the Old Testament, people brought to God burnt-offerings "for the odor of spiritual fragrance." In the New Testament we are called to bring our whole being as a sacrifice to God. Saint Paul writes: "I appeal to you . . . to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship (Rom 12.1).

This is what the presence of the Holy Spirit in us means. It makes our life a living sacrifice. It may mean suffering in many cases, but certainly it is always joy. Even sufferings turn into joy. It is the joy of divine freedom, because the Holy Spirit is, as Saint Paul says, not the spirit of slavery but the spirit of sonship of God in which we cry: "Abba, Father" (Rom 8.15). We need not demand of ourselves and others any impossible heroic efforts of ascetism or of prayer, because we know that the Holy Spirit is praying in us and thus helps us in our spiritual struggle.

I must decrease, Christ in me must increase. This is how the divine image in us is restored to its full splendor. We become real icons of God through Christ in the Holy Spirit. We die, but at the same time we are given a new life in the kingdom of God.

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Meditation

ELIAS MOUTSOULAS

THE FEW WORDS THAT YOUR KINDNESS PERMITS ME TO SAY CONCERN the celebration of the twelve hundredth anniversary of the Seventh Ecumenical Synod, a synod which seals and, with its teaching about icons, reaffirms the work of all the previous councils of the Church.

The mystery of the icon fully encompasses the mystery of the divine *oikonomia*, the whole truth about God and man. The more we study it, the more we are astonished by its fathomless depth. As has already been pointed out, the theological justification of the icon lies in the event of the incarnation. In the union of the two natures of the person of Christ we encounter the wondrous unity of the infinite with the finite, of the uncreated with the created, of the divine with the human. This is a truth particularly emphasized by the Orthodox Church in continuity with the tradition of the fathers.

The Church fights against those who on account of matter deny the spirit, but she also fights against those who on account of the spirit deny matter. A denial of matter means a denial of God himself, the creator of matter, the creator of man in his own image and likeness. According to Saint John of Damascus, matter has never been "*atimos*," without honor, because "nothing made by God is worthless and without honor." This is a Manichean way of thinking. The depiction of Christ in his human form and by material means affirms the truth of the incarnation and the glorification of the material creation. Human nature and material creation have acquired a unique significance after the Incarnation and because of the Incarnation.

"Since God the Word became flesh, becoming like us in all respects save sin, and mixed with our own mixture (χρᾶμα) and without change (in his divinity) deified the flesh by means of the unconfused permeation (ἀσυγχύτον περιχωρήσεως) of his divinity and his flesh, indeed we have become holy," says Saint John of Damascus. The

same saint emphasizes that "matter is a vehicle and an instrument of the divine grace and a partaker of divine energies."

In closing I should like to underline again that in the mystery of the icon we have a recapitulation of the entire mystery of the divine *oikonomia*. It begins with the eternal begetting of the Logos, the image of the Father, continues with the creation of man in God's image and likeness, and is followed by the assuming of the whole human nature by the Logos, the manifestation of the invisible God. Finally, it reaches unique heights with the resurrection and ascension of Christ, which also constitutes the elevation and glorification not only of man, but of the entire creation.

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Meditation

CONSTANTINE ANDRONIKOF

THE GENERAL THEME OF THIS THIRD CONFERENCE OF ORTHODOX Theological Schools truly challenges us. It states that "Orthodoxy faces the twenty-first century." However, to be more accurate and objective as regards historical reality, it should state not that "Orthodoxy" but that "the several Orthodox churches face the twenty-first century." And the fact is that they are in some disarray. Their facing the coming century is somewhat disjointed.

One of the reasons of such a sorry, even dramatic, situation is simply that we do not fully apply our own theological teaching in the heart of the ecclesial institution itself.

Some of the contributions and meditations here called us to be honest, to take into account the present needs of the world, to be "contextualized" and cogent in our endeavours to spread the Word of God. Doubtless, we must be all that. However, in order to achieve it, we also must be *credible* in our own posture. And to some extent we are not, vis-à-vis confessions, religions, ideologies, vis-à-vis the world.

Indeed, we are united in heart and mind, unanimous in our lives and theology. And yet, we remain deeply divided in our organization, in our institution on this earth. Nevertheless, we know very well the ecclesiological principle made abundantly clear and firmly established since the third century of the history of Christianity: the Church is one, as Christ is one and that throughout the world, locally, this church is physically, canonically, and spiritually composed of a flock of faithful around their own pastor.

Actually, that is not the case. We do not abide by our own canons.

The Orthodox are fragmented among different jurisdictions, overlapping the same territory. In practice, here and there, they co-exist in peace; sometimes they wish to ignore each other, when they do not compete, if they behave as rivals.

For what pursuit? The kingdom, church unity, our national ideals, or some other ideal? Separation, not assembly, seems to be our prevailing state, according to unwritten and uncanonical theories or ideologies, verging on solemnly condemned *phyletism*.

That is hardly what our theological schools are supposed to teach. However, when from inside and outside the Church, one sees that the teaching of the Church in that respect is not followed by her very members, perplexity and anxiety may become anguish. Whereas, to paraphrase a sentence from the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, "our end shall be according to our works" and from the Epistle to the Galatians: "We that desire to be under the law, do we not hear the law," that of our one and catholic Church?

With all due respect and humility, albeit most regretfully, to quote but one example of the disarray or disunity in point. In a capital of Western Europe, there are six or seven "independent" churches, some of which recognize each other while others do not, four of which having their own unity meet occasionally in brotherly cooperation; in addition, there is a churchlike organization headed by a bishop with whom none of the others concelebrate, although he canonically depends on an East European Patriarchate

And what about the unwarranted liturgical divisions resulting in the use of two different calendars, sometimes cutting asunder members of the same flock, or of one family? What is the ecclesiological meaning of the worship in the same cathedral, upstairs one goes through Christmas Lent while below one celebrates the Nativity?

Now, within that motley of jurisdiction throughout the world, Orthodox doctrine, thanks to God, has remained so far intact. However, some disquieting disparities already emerge here and there among neighboring Churches (e.g., as regards ordination or reception into the Church . . .). On the other hand, very rewarding trends towards unity are witnessed (as we see, for instance, in Worcester, MA). They offer a marked contrast with the overall situation, stressing its untenable character.

Be that as it may, the credibility, the seriousness, the convincing effectiveness of the Orthodox teaching and way of life can but severely suffer from the faults in our structure. Would it not be the duty of theologians, especially in schools, to point it out, while reminding the Church of her ecclesiology?

To conclude, a last paraphrase would here be in order: "Let us stand

fast and be not entangled in a yoke of jurisdictional bondage!” (Gal 4.8).

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Yet, for the Byzantines, at least, what appears to have been lacking in their approach was an exploration of the theological propositions which they considered self-evident.

Concluding the collection of essays is a historical-theological study on "Filioque and the Fathers at the Council of Florence". Although this council is usually hailed as a success that failed, the author takes the bold stand of characterizing Florence as "a failure that almost succeeded" (p. 160). This he attributes to "the way in which the fathers were presented, read and understood the council itself" (p. 160). Regardless of the view held with regard to the characterization of the council, one must acknowledge the openness with which the author states his case. His unbiased assessment of the facts provides the objectivity necessary in reading history correctly and it is the basic ingredient required in pursuing dialogue.

In a word, one might say that this important collection of essays reflects throughout an openness and objectivity which are refreshing and hopeful. The reader is challenged time and again to think through the implications of preserving the past without really understanding it. Whether engaged in Inter-Orthodox or ecumenical dialogue, the author employs the same persuasive technique, prodding us on to examine the past with the intention of upholding a tradition which is alive for today. Certainly nothing less should be expected of one who earnestly yearns to see the Church the vibrant institution intended by her Founder.

Lewis J. Patsavos

On the Person of Christ: The Christology of Emperor Justinian. Translated and Introduced by Kenneth Paul Wesche. Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1991. Pp. 203. \$14.95, soft.

It is very encouraging to note that St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, the Holy Cross Orthodox Press, the St. Nectarios Press, and the Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies are publishing fine translations of original Patristic and Byzantine sources, thus making available to English readers crucial documents for the proper understanding of the historical development of the Christian Church. An excellent example of this is the volume entitled *On the Person of Christ*, which contains translations of *Against the Monophysites*, *Concerning the*

Three Chapters, and *On the True Faith* by the famous Byzantine Emperor Justinian (527-565). The first two have been translated by the Rev. Dr. Kenneth Wesche, Associate of St. Mary's Orthodox Cathedral in Minneapolis, Minnesota and the text of *The Edict of Faith* was translated by Henry R. Percival. Though technically called "Letters," these documents are actually treatises that strongly present and defend the Chalcedonian Orthodox position. They certainly demonstrate that a Christian emperor, a layman, could do theology and do it forcefully and competently. As Father Wesche points out, the three treatises translated here reflect an interpretation of the Council of Chalcedon's (451) Christological definition that is upheld by Orthodox theologians to this very day and set the stage for the Christological definition of the Fifth Ecumenical Council. It was, of course, also part of Justinian's purpose to unify and restore the Empire. In order to do this he needed a unified church and had to convince the Monophysites of the wrongness of their position, which produced political division as well as religious heresy.

Certainly, the present volume presents the Christology represented by Justinian with his significant analysis of the Church's doctrine of the Holy Trinity, which posits that Christ is the Second Person of the Trinity who was incarnate. This is fundamental to Justinian's exposition of Christology. He stresses the identity of Jesus as the Divine Logos. In all of this, *hypostasis*, and not nature, is the foundation of being. Conceptually detached from "essence," it was used to designate the particular rather than the universal, but it does not lose the ontological connotation it had as the foundation of being when attached to the concept of essence. Philosophically, this means that the foundation of all reality is not abstract, one, divine being or nature but it is *hypostasis*, or more precisely, the *hypostaseis* of the Holy Trinity. In this regard, the *hypostasis* of the Father is the foundation of all being because He is the source of the divine uncreated nature and the divine uncreated *hypostasis* of the Son and the Holy Spirit, in whom the divine nature exists.

In *Against the Monophysites* Justinian makes clear that "The Holy Church of God proclaims One in Three, Three in One; one God the Father, from whom are all things, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and one Holy Spirit, in whom are all things" (p.29). The same essence is found in each *hypostasis* or *prosopon* but we worship one essence in three *hypostaseis*. "The three Persons, therefore, are truly three; yet 'three' does not enumerate unequal

realities, but unites equal realities identical in honor" (p. 29), according to Justinian, who cites St. Cyril as well:

The Divine Word, who is co-eternal with God the Father, and who took the form of a servant, is perfect in divinity just as he is perfect in humanity. He is not composed simply of divinity and flesh to form one Christ, and Lord, and Son; but he is composed of two complete natures, I mean of divinity and humanity, wondrously uniting them both in one and the same Person (p. 33).

Unequivocally, for Justinian, Christ is One in two natures, clearly two natures in the one *hypostasis* or one *prosopon* of Christ. Citing St. Gregory of Nyssa, Justinian supports the view that "But the fact that we use one name when explaining the faith clearly teaches us that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in whom we believe, are one in essence. These names do not teach a difference of nature, but rather properties by which the *hypostases* [sic] are known" (p. 97).

Perhaps this review could appropriately end with a portion of the Confession of Justinian in *The Edict on the Faith*:

Therefore, we confess our belief, in the consubstantial Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, one Godhead, nature, essence, power, and authority, glorified in three *hypostases* [sic] or *prosopa*, in whom we have been baptized, in whom we have believed, and to whom we have been joined. We believe that in their properties they are distinct, but with respect to the Godhead they are one. For we worship One in Three and Three in One . . . (pp. 163-64).

There is much in this volume that deserves very close attention by every serious Orthodox theologian (including the important discussion of the Theotokos) but even the general reader with a concern for a detailed discussion of Christology and its crucial importance for the proper understanding of Christian theology will want to become intimately, even if slowly, familiar with this remarkable exposition of Chalcedonian Orthodox theology. Father Wesche is to be commended for providing us with this valuable opportunity.

John E. Rexine
Colgate University

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Orthodox Theology and Ecological Problems

M. S. IVANOV

JUNE 11 OF THE CURRENT YEAR IS MARKED BY THE BIRTH OF THE FIVE billionth child. "This event is a sort of chime of the horologe of history. It warns that there is no loitering and delaying the solution of some pressing problems,"¹ one of which is the ecological problem.

The humanity of our time is confronted with an urgent and difficult task: to penetrate into the system of natural balance and to restore and maintain it. This is a global task. Efforts of a certain state or a certain continent are insufficient to solve it. All human beings living on the same planet and under the same sky are responsible for it. Also called to join these endeavors are Christians, as the ecological problem is at the same time a theological one.

The Christian attitude towards the environment is of exceptional importance, since it predominates, in the first place, the Christian vision of man of the future. The life of future generations depends, to a large extent, on us, on our activity. So our trace in nature, whether creative or destructive, will affect our successors.

Thus, if viewed in the light of a Christian responsibility, the attitude towards nature is a superlative commandment of God. The fact that love is extrapolated upon the future does not obscure the essence of the commandment since Christians are called to love both neighbors and aliens, fellow-citizens and those who will come in the future (Eph 2.17). The time has come when we should concern ourselves with the destiny of our successors. What legacy will they inherit from our epoch: an ecologically pure environment or a weapon bringing total death? "Don't our children and grandchildren deserve a better lot than metal fraught with death?"²

¹IZVESTIA, July 12, 1987, p. 2

²Ibid.

The Christian attitude towards nature requires a broader framework than love for mankind. Ideally, the environment is to serve people, but also inclusive in it is an equally important mission which requires an attitude different than that of a consumer however reasonably he uses material goods.

The first man was brought into the world as a lord into a house, as a priest into a temple, and his attitude was predetermined as "overseeing" and "having domination" over the environment (Gen. 1.28).³ The thousand-year history of human relations with nature may prompt us to dwell on divine providence and, specifically, the idea that the first man was called to conquer, to curb, and to subdue virgin nature which allegedly was wild and unbridled, since we sometimes erringly comprehend the words "having domination" as our earthly notion involving alienation, distrust, and even hostility.

However, the Bible further teaches that the cited commandment does not imply that man is to be hostile to the world which God has given him dominion over, but to cherish and love nature. According to God's design, the environment is expected to treat man not as a passive onlooker, a grabber, or a plunderer, guided by a single consumptive principle — "nature is the object to be devastated and not to be replenished" — but as a good and thoughtful proprietor. So, according to the Bible, man is called "to till and keep" the majestic kingdom of which he has been made the proprietor. We see that while man remained obedient to the design of God, there were no frictions between him and nature. Man did not disturb the biological balance: the relationship between man and nature was viable and intrinsic. All the inhabitants of the entity were attached to one another. Man, though elevated above nature, was still an integral element of that natural balance and was its focus. The whole world has been planned as "a cosmic liturgy." The biblical text picturing the life of the first man contains only several lines which emphasize the universal unity. Nevertheless, these lines fully depict the harmony between man and the environment in its virginity. The second chapter of Genesis reads: "So out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all cattle and to the birds of the air and to every beast of the field" (Gen 2.19-20). That is the only example of a sinless man's attitude towards nature delineated in the first book of the Bible. Narrative imagery and anthropomorphisms cannot conceal rich contents and deep meaning.

³Metropolitan Filaret (Drozdov), *Zapiski na knigu Bytia* [Note on the Book of Genesis] (Moscow, 1897) p. 20

On the one hand we see man, for whom the environment is his native and congenial elements. Man is receptive to all that fills the earth and lives on it. Giving names to animals stresses not only the rationale in man, but at the same time demonstrates the close link of the first inhabitant of our planet with the animal kingdom and, hence, with all living things.

On the other hand, this proximity is evident in the animal kingdom's attitude towards man. Later similar phenomena occurred only in the life stories of chosen saints who rose to spiritual heights of the first pure and sinless man. Self-denying enthusiasts who adore nature and sacrifice their time, strength, and efforts for its benefit may also be successful in overcoming the gap between themselves and the animal kingdom so that the latter gradually come to treat man as their thoughtful lord and reliable friend without any fear or hostility.

It is noteworthy that the commandment to secure and maintain the environment, that is, "to till and keep the ground," was one of the first given to man. Eloquent is the presentation of this commandment to man right after his appearance. First of all, it was for man to realize the exceptional significance of the environment. For him it was his native house and the stronghold of his dwelling. Life in this house obliged man to care for its prosperity.⁴

It was as if the commandment told him that a healthy environment was one of the major conditions of human development. In any case, this factor, though guaranteed, has not been static, given once and forever. It has stirred human inertness. Man, as the image of the Creator, has been destined to work industriously and fruitfully in his earthly vineyard. Man has had to maintain the ecological balance and work for transformation of the environment. We have no sufficient reason to over idealize the original state of nature. Nature, probably as well as man, needed further making, since it was always following man as was the rest of creation. Saint Paul witnessed this condition with the following words: "for the creation was subjected to futility not of its own will, but by the will of him who subjected it in hope. The creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and to obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Rom 8.19-21).

These words of the apostle testify to the close relationship between man and the organic world. They also underline that the environment does not only mean the dwelling place of man. Bonds between nature and man are much more ramified. The Bible states that man was not only central to the world, but that he was made of dust

⁴Lossky "Dogmatic Theology" (Russian) *Theological Studies*, No. 8, ed. Moscow Patriarchate (19) p.154

and being given "the breath of life," or according to a more correct translation from Hebrew "the breath of lives,"⁵ he incorporated life in its three forms: mineral, vegetable, and animal. Man is not alien to the world. Immeasurably raised above the world by the image of God living in him, "made little less than God" (Ps 8.6), he in his wholeness is still an integral part of cosmic matter and cosmic life. Thus, patristic literature calls man a "microcosm" with good reason.

This integrity with the environment is of great significance. Man created by God absorbs the created cosmos in its totality and thus enters into unity with nature. Thus, the destinies of man and nature are inseparable. It appears as though nature entrusts itself to man, and man assumes the responsibility for nature. Thus, man and nature form one body, one organism. As a result, earthly nature is the continuation of man's bodily nature, that is, "anthroposphere."⁶

All that has been stated above signifies the exclusive dignity of mankind in the world which has been created by God's design. The path of the world is not one of "evil eternity"⁷ and life, that takes refuge in the world. It is not a "senseless rotation." The ideal ground of the world laid by the wise creator opens before it a great and glorious future. As Saint Paul states, the world is called for "the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Rom 8.21). In other words, the paths of man and nature coincide to some extent. Both man and the world around him are bound to achieve the state of grace. It is man who is charged to act as mediator in the created world's ascent to God.

Man is "a person of earthly cosmos,"⁸ a word, a logos, through which the world speaks of itself.⁹ It is only in man that the cosmic process which points to the victory of being over non-being, of life over death, may be triumphant.¹⁰ Thus, man is confronted with a two-fold task: while reviving and improving himself, he is to lead the whole creation to perfection. This duality is revealed in God's design when "cosmic Adam, having irretrievably given himself to God, would deliver him his whole creation and get from him in mutual love by grace all that God possesses by nature. Thus, the deification of man

⁵Metropolitan Filaret, "Zapiski," p. 38.

⁶Lossky "Dogmatic Theology," p. 156.

⁷A. Tuberovsky *Voskresenie Hristovo* [Resurrection of Christ] (Sergiev Posad, 1916), p. 10.

⁸Lossky, "Dogmatic Theology," p. 155.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Tuberovsky, *Voskresenie Hristovo*, p. 14.

and through him all of the cosmos, would be realized. That is the essence and purpose of the anthropocosmic unity."¹¹

Sin which came into the world resulted in catastrophic implications not only for man, but also for his habitat. Unity of man and the world around him was disrupted. Though nature obediently yielded to the indisputable law and followed the lord of the earth, the consequences were negative. Nature, like a mirror, reflected man's first crime: "thorns" of sin seeded in the human heart poured out on the earth as "thorns and thistles" (Gen 3.18). God's judgment on sinful people reflects the response of the environment to evil introduced into the world by man.

Under the new circumstances of life sinful man had no alternative: as it is said in the Holy Scriptures, he had to "till the ground in the sweat of his face . . . to eat bread" (Gen 3.19). Through thousands of years working in "the sweat of his face," man has come to realize that he is unable to master the riches of nature. The feeling of weakness generated in man's heart is inevitable. Nature concealed its numerous mysteries from man and quite often prevented him from discovering its riches. At the same time, it often astonished the intimidated human beings with its sinister and formidable phenomena and disasters. Human beings used to treat nature with fear, distrust, and even aggressiveness. The analogous sentiments were at the roots of the first usage of the cited words "curbing" and "conquering." But these words are incompatible with Christian consciousness.

It is of no use to deny that natural phenomena and processes are not always concordant with human plans and aspirations, and that they sometimes even contradict them. Nevertheless, rough and aggressive interference in nature, as human experience of many years has shown, will often, even if advantageous for a short period of time, turn out a still greater evil. Earthly tenants may have arrived somewhat later, but they have discovered that the environment needs understanding rather than conquering."¹² Nature has never had a feud with human beings; that is understood now more and more clearly. Some things that were earlier considered hostile and unnatural have now become invaluablely beneficial. Marvelous expediency of the environment, its wisdom, and rationality often makes man feel bewildered. There is no denying that nature is far from being perfect. Our everyday life testifies to it. Perfection is ascribed to nature, but not given to it. According to God's design, man and nature must rise

¹¹Lossky, "Dogmatic Theology," p. 158.

¹²*Izvestia*, July 25, 1975.

to perfection together. Therefore, we cannot speak of natural perfection until man has achieved his ultimate goal.

Sin has blocked the course which was originally charted for nature's development with many obstacles. However, as the "thorns and thistles" appeared to be a rather serious hindrance, God's plan for nature has not changed. Once again, nature is being called to share in the spiritual life and in general transformation. The incarnation of Jesus Christ clarifies the great dignity of the cosmos and material things in the sight of God. The hypostatic Word has become flesh, thereby integrating the whole of the created world into his human nature; "He has become the core of all things, heavenly and earthly alike, from the very simple to the unfathomable ones."¹³ In the incarnation the dust from the ground out of which man was formed reclaims its belonging to the divine nature, which sanctifies and outlines the way of the material world towards the prize of the upward call (Phil 3.14). The body of Christ cannot be perceived as an entity outside of the cosmos.¹⁴ The body of Christ is both all-bodily and all-cosmic. The incarnation has opened the way to man's divinity¹⁵ and through man, to the transformation of the whole world. The very act of the transfiguration of the Lord partially unveils for us the mystery of the future glory of the whole material world. The divine light at Mount Tabor illuminated everything, the body of Christ, his clothes, and all things around him. The incarnation has revealed the catholic nature of the kingdom of God, to which both heaven, or the spiritual world, and earth, the material world around us, are being called together to become a new heaven and a new earth (Rev 21.1), so that God may be "everything to every one" (1 Cor 15.28).

Christianity is always cosmic. Just as it always implies the acceptance of the world, so too it offers the revelation about the salvation of the world.¹⁶ Thus, the accusation of "acosmism" brought against it has no firm ground. Such accusations, as a rule, are based on two arguments. The first is that Christian hermits and ascetics are alleged to have a negative attitude to the world. The second implies a reference to the absence of a complete teaching on the cosmos in Christian doctrine. With regard to the first accusation, it should be noted that in most cases it is brought forth out of misunderstanding. Those who regard Christianity as negatively disposed to the world

¹³50th Anniversary of the Restored Patriarchate, JMP, special issue p. 67.

¹⁴Metropolit Antonij Von Souroush, *Theologie der Materie* "Philoxenia," V. Mazburg/Lahn.

¹⁵Tuberovsky, *Voskresenie Hristovo*, p. 23.

¹⁶V. V. Zenkovsky, *Problema kosmosa v hristianstve 'Zhivoye predanie'* [Cosmos and Christianity. Living Tradition] collected articles.

either forget or are unaware of the fact that in Christian terms, the word "world" carries two different meanings: 1) the universe as God's creation, and 2) negative worldliness of human behavior. These two different meanings of the term "world" are often made clear in the works of the holy and ascetic fathers. For example, Saint Mark the Hermit writes: "We are not to love the world, neither the things that are in the world. This commandment, however, is given to us not to hate indiscriminately God's creation as it is, but rather to sever whatever might lead to passion."¹⁷ Saint Isaac the Syrian notes that "the world is a compound notion comprising what we call passions. Referring to passions all together, we call them by one word—the 'world.' In short, the world is the life of the flesh and 'wishing' of the flesh."¹⁸ Here, as we see, Saint Isaac takes the second meaning of the "world" without any reference to its first meaning as the "universe." Saint John Chrysostom points out that in the Holy Scriptures the word "world" is often used to describe evil ways and doings.¹⁹ Saint Basil the Great used the term "world" to describe the unnatural and ill manifestations of the human soul.²⁰ In the New Testament commandment "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world" (1 Jn 2.15), the term under discussion is also used in its second meaning, for this commandment, indeed, cannot be about the world which God loved so much that he gave his only-begotten Son for its salvation (Jn 3.16). At the same time, however, the confusion of these two meanings is so deep that it has even become rooted in the conscience of many Christians. Because of this, many hermits and ascetics, to whom such-minded-people would ascribe the contempt of the world and total withdrawal from it, had to defend themselves against this falsehood.

Coming back to the second argument accusing Christianity of "acosmism," which states that the Christian teaching on the cosmos is very obscure and incomplete, we can say that this is true enough: Christianity so far does not have a thorough theoretical study on this question.²¹ It will be erroneous, however, to see in this a repudiation of the cosmos. That we have not elaborated on the problem of the cosmos as it deserves can be rather explained by our insensitivity

¹⁷Archimandrite Ilarion, "Edinstvo ideala Hristova in 'Hristianin' The Unity of Christ's Ideal" in *Christian* 1915, No.1, p. 92.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹The problem of the cosmos was thoroughly discussed by Saint Maximos the Confessor. But many questions in this field he left unfinished.

to our surroundings. Under the burden of a host of other problems, we often fail to notice the world, with its high predestination together with man to enter eternal life and to fulfill our mediatory mission in its behalf. Such obliviousness makes us indifferent to the world, insensitive to its reality and its potentials.

Nowadays, the surrounding world seems to remind people of its sickness and very critical situation but not, as some people think, to keep them away from any involvement as it were, for such a withdrawal would be very much lacking in reason. Man is called to creative activity, to transformation and construction. Man is the master of the world. It is only in man that the world finds the realization and meaning of its existence and its accomplishment. So any intentions to withdraw from involvement in the world are naive. It is not man's involvement as such, but rather the wrong character of this involvement that is the real cause of all ecological disarrangements. Errors of this kind have taken place in all times. Only in the past, when human activity did not have so great proportions and did not interfere with natural processes so much as it does now, these errors were less visible. Today, with ever-growing force, nature reminds people that they cannot build their involvement with it on consumptive principles alone. Every passing day discloses new facts denouncing human attitudes towards the environment, thereby warning man that the unlimited power he has recently gained over the forces of nature which were unknown to him before, like the fire of Prometheus, is capable of warming and burning at the same time.²²

The cause of the ecological crisis should not only be sought in the increasing technological power of man. There are many who think that technological development as a whole is hostile to nature, that technology and nature are always conflicting with each other, that all disorders and damages in the environment come with technological development. The proponents of this idea seem to forget about the great transformative work done by man at the workshop of nature which has indeed changed the face of the earth, thanks to the introduction of technology into many spheres of human activity. Technology is steered by man, and man alone is to decide whether technological advancement will serve to transform or to destroy nature. Technology is not responsible for being used to the detriment of ecology. Full responsibility should be given to man.

In other words, whether man's influence upon his environment is direct or comes through technological involvement, man always

²²*Priroda* [Nature], 7 (1972) 57.

remains a hypostasis of the world, the logos through which the surrounding world speaks of itself. Hence, one may realize the importance of the principles upon which man bases himself when communicating with nature. If in his attitude towards nature man proceeds from his conscience and loving care, then he will never be hostile or cause damage to nature. However, if he proceeds from selfish intentions and enters into conflict with nature deliberately, aware of the detriment he is going to cause it, there can be no harmony to speak of between man and his environment, and no other word but "criminal" to describe his activities.

Man's love and care for nature have grown considerably in today's world. The warnings given by nature itself are not the only explanation for this changing attitude. The inhabitants of the earth have become more and more aware of the fact that nature is their faithful friend and a reliable companion in life, and that isolated from nature, human life cannot be full and delightful. People are anxious to look at nature, with its mysterious life, in the face.²³ The ecological question is a worldwide, global issue. Therefore, no one should remain indifferent to its study and solution. Only by concerted efforts of all peoples and states on our planet can the conflict between man and nature be removed. Only in the conditions of peaceful coexistence and international cooperation can ecological balance be restored. Christians, as believing in the high dignity of the created cosmos, must also make their contribution to the noble cause of the transformation of nature into a healthier state. This is God's commandment (Gen 2.15). This is what the world expects from us.

²³ *Journal of Moscow Patriarchate* 4 (1974) 35.

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Orthodox Theology and the Problems of the Environment

CONSTANTIN VOICU

KNOWLEDGE ABOUT AND TRANSFORMATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT IS one of the principal human vocations. The destruction of nature by humans and the dehumanized media artificially created by them are almost as old as human civilization.¹ But practically speaking this has not been a problem up until our own time, because until now the integrity of creation has not been that seriously affected. Human beings and previous human communities have lived in harmony with nature. However, today both serious and global problems in the environment have appeared.

Our planet is surrounded by a sense of alarm: nature is in jeopardy!² This alarm has been sounded by scholars world-wide. In the past ten to fifteen years the environmental problem has been raised to planetary proportions inasmuch as the surrounding environment has been subjected to a serious process of biological, chemical, and physical deterioration. The modern world is seriously threatened by the consequences of upsetting the natural balance. Today especially the effects of pollution have become threatening to the ecosystem. Some of the effects have been devastating and seem to be irreversible. These will have serious repercussions not only on the quality of life but even on the whole of existence.

One hears more and more of environmental problems throughout the entire world because of the serious natural imbalance produced by the abuse and uncontrolled use of modern technologies, excessive

¹A. Tanase, "Umanismul si conditia umana in civilizatia contemporana." In the collection, *Ideii Contemporane* (Bucharest, 1985) pp. 45-46.

²V. Ianovici, "Omul — Creatia si Creatorul Mediului sau Inconjurator," E. Bonnefous, "Omul sau Natura?" in the collection, *Ideii Contemporane* (Bucharest, 1996) p. vi.

industrialization, and exploitative actions by human communities driven by greed and competition. Ecological law, underscoring the unity of God's creation, demonstrates that all of existence is bound together. Some of the effects of human actions—pollution, armaments, increased radioactivity, and the like—have progressively worsened the environment and with it the quality of life.³ Also, some species of animals and plants have been destroyed or even have become extinct. Human brutality with a thirst for profit has brought, through its technology, the destruction of flower and fauna. A serious imbalance in nature is created by the destruction of plants and massive deforestation. One speaks today of the so called "death of the forests," brought about by sulfur dioxide pollutants producing acid rain.⁴

The contemporary ecological crisis is caused by pollution of the air, soil, and water, by the exhaustion of the earth's resources, by depletion of some raw materials, and much more. Some have considered that part of the crisis is the population growth, but population in and of itself does not cause the degradation of the ecosystem; rather, it is the manner in which humans make use of the habitat and scientific advances.

However, the most serious aspect of the environmental crisis is nuclear pollution. "Nuclear fire," that is to say, the destructive effect of atomic radiation on living beings, is by far the most noxious. This pollution is produced by radioactive wastes resulting from both economic activities and research, as well as by nuclear fallout from atomic experiments that also negatively affect the climate. Oceanic plankton is destroyed as a result of radioactive residue thrown into the seas. The effects of radioactive pollution on both the aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems are multiple. The resulting genetic carcinogens affect not only those living today but also generations to come.⁵ The appeal made at the WCC Sixth General Assembly in Vancouver in 1983 by the inhabitants of the Marshall Islands concerning the atomic pollution in the waters surrounding their islands was especially moving.⁶

³Nicolae, Metropolitan of Banat, "Teologie si ecologie," in *Indrumatorul Bisericesc* (Sibiu, 1976) p. 38. V. Kernbach, "E Posibila o Catastrofa Ecologica," *Magazin* (No. 926, 5 July, 1975) p. 4.

⁴N. Docsanescu, "Oxizii impotriva clorofilei," *Romania Pitereasca* (No.4/172), April, 1986) p. 16; "Ploi Acide, Reactii Chimice Elucidate," *Muncetorul Sanitar* (No 12, 25 March 1986) p. 8.

⁵B. Commener, "Cercul care se inchide," *Natura, Omul si Tehnica*, in the collection *Ideii Contemporane* (Bucharest, 1980) pp. 50-65. I. Giosila, "Probleme de radioecologie experimentală a apelor dulci" in B. Stugre, coordinator, *Probleme Moderne de Ecologie* (Bucharest, 1982) pp. 391-95.

⁶A. Plamadeala, "Pacea, Problema de Maxima Urgenta a Zilelor Noastre," *Telegraful Roman* (No. 25-28/1984) p. 6.

In researching the consequences of a nuclear war, scientists have come to the following careful conclusions: if only twelve percent of the existing stockpile of nuclear weapons were used, the ecological balance of the entire planet would be compromised. The ensuing radioactive pollution of the stratosphere would produce a "nuclear winter." Clouds of smoke, haze, and radioactive pollution would block the heat and light of the sun, producing a long night during which the basic foundation of the entire ecosystem would be destroyed. Temperatures would drop below thirty degrees centigrade and wind currents would change, unleashing unprecedented storms. This would mean the destruction of all life on the earth.⁷ Only the two great powers are capable of unleashing nuclear weapons of the magnitude to destroy everything, all of humanity, many times over, perhaps ten times over.⁸

The arms buildup is in itself a factor in the environmental crisis. The aberrant course of the arms buildup (e.g., that it now desires to move into space) contributes to aggravating the environmental crisis in two ways. Firstly, forty percent of all human achievement, scientific and technical, as well as a great deal of rare and precious raw materials, are wasted in the insane buildup of arms, that is to say in the suicide of everything. And, on the other hand, the extent of military experiments and maneuvers produce a sizable ecological imbalance. "Star Wars," against which the international voice of public opinion has been raised, would profoundly affect the unity and integrity of creation. Therefore, it must affirm that the condition of the environment is bound to the maintenance of peace, and is fundamentally of the highest priority for the modern world.⁹

The ecological problem is formed by a three fold whole: justice, disarmament, and development. A better environment will never exist without a more just social order. All persons of goodwill, all honorable and responsible people, are urging that the enormous technical, material, and human potential, unwisely and dangerously wasted on the arms race, be used for the elimination of hunger (every two seconds an innocent child dies), for development, for the transformation of the earth's deserts into farmlands, that the earth become

⁷A. Plamadeala, "Noi pericole ce ameninta darul sacral vietii: indatoririle noastre," *Telegraful Roman* (No. 11-12/1985) p. 2. V. Mihoc, "Indatoririle Bisericilor in fata noilor pericole ce ameninta pacea si viata pe planeta noastra," Paper given at the 45th Interconfessional Conference, 5 June, 1985.

⁸*Lumea*, 3 April, 1986, p. 3.

⁹Klaus Sahlgren, Secretary of the UN Executive Committee of the Economic Commission for Europe at the Multilateral Conference on the Environment of June, 1984; compare Von Hans-Peter Gensichen, "Sorge für die Schöpfung," *Die Zeichen der Zeit*, Evangelisch Monatsschrift für Mitarbeiter der Kirche, märz, 1985, p. 54.

an immense garden for work and the spiritual life, and not be turned into a desolate wasteland. The profound and sincere desire of both the young child with an eye toward paradise and the senior citizen graced with the white hair of wisdom is that the specter of a nuclear winter be replaced with the certainty of peace and the blessings of life.

The disruption of the ecological equilibrium has produced serious concern throughout the whole world, especially since 1972,¹⁰ considered by many to be the year humanity awoke to its responsibility in caring for creation. Thus the protection of nature became a central focus for governments, parliaments, and international organizations. It is enough to recall the United Nations Conference on pollution held in Stockholm in 1972 with the theme "Just One World." It was at that time that the "United Nations program for the environment" was adopted in which the appeal was made to: "conserve and improve the human environment for the benefit of all peoples and their heirs."¹¹ In 1974 the International Foundation for the Habitat and Human Settlements was founded. Similarly, the Final Act, signed in Helsinki in 1975 by leaders and representatives of thirty five nations, stipulated the steps that would be taken to restore and maintain the ecological balance. June fifth has become the international day for the environment.

Concern for the whole of creation has been shown to be a general problem for all humanity which can and must be solved only through the cooperation of all the earth's peoples. Thanks to the real danger created by the imbalances in nature, a genuine campaign has been launched, made up of friends of nature and defenders of humanity.

In times such as these, when the resolution of environmental problems are of such great necessity, we Christians cannot remain passive or uncommitted. On the contrary, we must be the ones most active in the defense of the integrity of creation, for in doing this we will contribute to removing the serious danger facing the sacred gift of life. The destruction of the ecological balance is then a crime against life, and the defense of the integrity of creation means to work and defend the supreme human good: life. The environmental crisis means that the harmony between humanity and the whole of creation has been placed in peril. For us today, it demands a real bond, a living unity between the environment and technologized humanity.¹²

To take care for the integrity of creation is then especially of pres-

¹⁰It was in 1972 that the first Report of the Club of Rome, Donella H. Meadows, and others, *The Limits to Growth* (New York, 1972) first appeared.

¹¹Thomas Sieger Derr, "Ecologie et liberation humaine," Editions *Labor et Fides* (Geneva, 1974), p. 177; also N. Buzescu, *Orthodoxia* (Bucharest, No. 1/1976) p. 255.

¹²Olivier Clement, *Questions sur l' homme* (Paris, 1972), p. 172.

ent interest because creation and humanity itself are at the edge of a precipice. This problem which is of wide interest comes to us as an issue on which there is ecumenical and theological convergence. Christian responsibility is both communitarian and cosmic.

The Integrity of Creation in Light of Divine Revelation and the Bases for Our Responsibility Toward It.

The unity and integrity of creation follows, firstly, from the unity of God and the dependence of all existence on its Creator and God, who has brought everything from non-being into being "with wisdom" (Ps 103.25). God is the creator of all and therefore he not only sustains human existence, but also the whole creation in the midst of which human beings find themselves.¹³ The world depends in essence, in origins and in its very constitution on God, because it is the work of the divine goodness and omnipotence.

Biblical references toward creation reveal to us that the creation is whole, complete, totally in conformity with the plan and will of the Creator. God created the world good. There are seven references in the *Heximerion* to God's creation as "good" (Gen 1. 4, 8, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25). But after the Creator made the human person as the crowning of the whole creation, "all" of that which had been made, he says "that it was very good." ("Tob meob," Gen 1.31). This truth is suggested by the beauty of the body, because the body composed of all of its members is much more beautiful than each part separately. Just as through the harmonic unity of the members one obtains a whole beauty, so through the unity and coexistence of all the creation a harmony, a goodness, a beauty, a wholeness of creation is formed. "Tob meob" (Gen 1.31) is a comprehensive evaluation, not limited by time. The world created by God is good and beautiful in the most comprehensive and profound sense¹⁴ of the concept of "tob."

From the point of reference of Genesis, we understand the human as a biological and spiritual unity in interdependence with nature. Saint Basil the Great, commenting on the *Heximerion*, says that all the disparate parts of creation were bound together in an unbreakable unity of love, in a unique communion, and in a single harmony.¹⁵

¹³St. Augustine, *The Confessions*, Romanian translation by N. Barbu (Institutului Biblic si Misiune Ortodoxa: Bucharest, 1985) pp. 311-14.

¹⁴Michael Gross, "Unitatea si Integritatea Lumii Create," a paper delivered at the Interconfessional Theological Conference held at Cluj-Napoca, 12-13 November, 1985, p. 6.

¹⁵Saint Basil the Great, *The Heximerion*, Chapter 1; also N. Zabolotsky, "The Christian Interpretation of the Problems of Modern Theology," *The Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* (No. 4, 1972) p. 38.

This unity between creation and the human is manifested through the continual desire of human nature to know the mysteries of nature, and through the fervent human longing to find rest in the midst of nature. The human person has a nostalgia for a pure and undefiled nature. That is why human history is full of the history of nature, because the human is a person in communion with nature. It is in this context that we understand the ecological problems of nature and the human as inseparable, because these two realities are complementary. Christian theology, through the doctrine of the incarnation and the mysteries, expresses the solidarity of God with nature and humanity, and some of these elements of creation (water, bread, wine, oil, etc.) are signs and means of divine grace.

Humanity has gone against the commandments of the Creator, and nature has revolted against it to punish it¹⁶ (Wis of Sol 16.27) and the original unity and harmony between humanity and creation has been destroyed. The human person, through toil (Gen 3.18) and the subsequent creative capacity, attempts to recreate this harmony destroyed through sin. But humans are not able to succeed using only their own power.

In order to restore this harmony, the Son of God became incarnate and realized a "new creation." Through the incarnation of the Logos "all matter was incarnate."¹⁷ There exists an essential bond between the incarnate Word and the whole of creation, clearly evident in the Scripture: "He was in the world, and the world was made through him . . . and he came to his own home" (Jn 1.10, 11).

The Son of God, incarnating himself, comes into this world, "uniting the divided," says Saint Maximos the Confessor. "He makes the whole creation one and imparts to the human being *gnostike*, that is, spiritual knowledge of the inner principle of things."¹⁸ The Savior has renewed and redeemed the whole creation, *ta panta* (Col 1.20), "for from him and through him and to him are all things" (Rom 11.36). "Through the death and resurrection of the Lord," says Saint Athanasios the Great, "the separation that had appeared after the fall between paradise and the world has disappeared, and paradise has been reopened again, because he himself has returned on the earth after the resurrection and has shown that paradise and the earth are one. Through his ascension to heaven, he unites heaven and earth and has shown that paradise and the earth are one."¹⁹ In this way

¹⁶Saint Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 19, 4,4, PL 41.629.

¹⁷Teilhard de Chardin, compare Derr, "Ecologie et liberation humaine" p. 251.

¹⁸Saint Maximos the Confessor, *Ambigua*, Romanian trans. D. Staniloae (Institutului Biblic si Misiune Ortodoxa: Bucharest, 1983) p. 262.

¹⁹Jean Meyendorff, *Le Christ dans la théologie byzantine* (Paris, 1968) p. 194; also

Christians, as "co-workers with God" (1 Cor 3.9), become responsible for themselves, their neighbor, and all of creation. The fathers call the human being the continuation of creation.

The definitive liberation of the world clouded by human sin required not only that God become human, but also that the human become god. The Lord Jesus has given humanity the possibility to receive the Spirit, and for the creation to be penetrated by the uncreated divine energies forming a total unity in his hand.²⁰ It is for this reason that salvation has a communitarian-cosmic dimension in Orthodox spirituality. The universe is saved, is lifted up, or is lost through the human person. It depends on us for nature to either blaspheme or pray.²¹ Only through the human can creation become "Christophoric" and "Pneumatophoric."

Our responsibility for the integrity of the creation is based on many principles:

a) Creation as the work of divine love is offered as a gift to the human by the Creator. This gift is a means of dialogue between the Creator and human persons, and also a means of dialogue in and between human persons. Only when human nature conceives of the world as the work of God can it properly respect the world, and act in such a way that it responds through the world to God the Creator.²² Creation is not only a gift of God given to us, but is also the human mission in Christ our Lord. This is the continual human mission that finishes only at the end of the age. It is the continual tension to make the world conform to God's plan. The Christian uses the world to make it as a gift to his or her fellow creatures, and through them to God. Through this act of offering the Christian does not lose the creation, rather he enriches it all the more in the fact that it was given. Through this gift we grow spiritually, breaking or removing our ego by focusing on sharing the limited resources of the world with our brothers and sisters of both today and tomorrow.²³

b) The human person as the image of God is the lord and crown of creation, in accordance with the divine commandment "Be fruitful

Dumitru Staniloae, "Creatia ca dar si Tainele Bisericii," *Orthodoxia* (No. 1, 1976) p. 18.

²⁰Clement, *Questions sur l' homme*, p.157.

²¹Vladimir Lossky, "Théologie Dogmatique," *Messenger de l' Exarchat du Patriarcat Russe en Europe Occidentale* (No. 48, 1964) p.227.

²²Dumitru Staniloae, "Chipul lui Dumnezeu si responsabilitatea lui in lumea," *Orthodoxia* (3/1975) p. 391.

²³Compare the report of the WCC Commission on Church and Society, "Nature, Justice, and the Eschatological Future." Also, Dumitru Staniloae, *Teologia Dogmatica Orthodoxa*, Vol. 1 (Bucharest, 1978) pp. 327-28.

and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth" (Gen 1.28). In this regard human beings are both the priests of creation because they sacrifice and mediate in the name of all, as well as the prophets of creation because they announce, through word and deed, the will of God. The human relationship toward nature is found in Genesis 1.28-29. Orthodox teaching and spirituality have understood this human lordship of nature as a use of creation for human needs and never as a despotic lordship, as an egotistical exploitation of nature, because this is the mind-set of sin. The human is the "archon" of creation in the name of God, through Christ, in order to transform it into a temple of the Creator.²⁴ Saint Gregory Palamas says that it is this characteristic which constitutes the image of God.²⁵ From this brief command to "subdue the earth," (Gen 1.26-28), Christian theology must of necessity understand it as "the mission of God," and at the same time to show what the moral limitations of this lordship are.²⁶ This authority as "archon" relative to nature never confers upon human beings the right to destroy, rather this characteristic carries with it an obligation to make use of God's creation rationally and creatively, to subdue it with a parental consciousness in order to maintain it and work with it according to the spirit of the divine good intentions and to work it accordingly.

c) The world was created before the human, but paradise was created by God after and for the human person, as a goal toward which they would progress through their own effort. And the whole world was created as a paradise.²⁷ We must, therefore, see each plot of land entrusted to us as a garden of paradise.²⁸ All of the earth is a paradise for those who see in things the divine logoi, a paradise which humans on the basis of the "image" are able to and must actualize. Look how Saint John of Damascus describes the earthly paradise before the fall: "And this is the divine paradise, planted in Eden by the hands of God, a very storehouse of joy and gladness of heart . . . it is temperate and the air that surrounds it is the rarest and purest."²⁹ God established the human person in this garden "to

²⁴Jean Meyendorff, *Initiation à la Théologie Byzantine* (Paris, 1975) p. 182; Vasile Coman, "Problema de antropologie crestina," *Mitropolia Banatului*, 7-8 (1975) 327.

²⁵PG 150.1165.

²⁶Hans Helmut Esser, "Macht euch die Erde untertan!" *Der Mensch minzt die Erde*, Studium-generale Inter-seminar, 1982-83, Aschendorf, Munich, p. 81.

²⁷Saint Symeon the New Theologian, Saint Nikita the Stylite, *The Philokalia*, Romanian translation, Vol. 6, pp. 121-358.

²⁸C. Galeriu, *Convorbiri Duhovnicesti* (Diocese of Roman and Husi, 1984) p. 203.

²⁹Saint John of Damascus, *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, (Grand Rapids, 1976), 9, p. 29; 25PG 94.912-13B.

till it and keep it" (Gen 2.15). Therefore the human person was placed there to complete a sacrament of action: to maintain the internal harmony and unity of the world and in this sense to work in the world. For us this commandment is "a mission and a responsibility, which also makes of work creative activity in the bosom of nature and in its protection . . . the characteristics that hold our essence, our definition, our place in the world."³⁰ This Garden of Eden, from the work of creation also gives us the impulse to build an earthly paradise, a new creation by human effort assisted by God's grace. For creation can fulfill its destiny to be humanized, transfigured, sanctified, divinized only through the human person "as a partner of God."

The divine *logoi* are hidden in the created universe, and the human mission, says Saint Maximos the Confessor, is that through our actions led by the logos within us, to come completely to the light of these *logoi* and the harmony among them. It clearly follows that humans should not produce something that can not possibly coexist harmoniously, like pollution, arms, and other causes of the environmental imbalance.³¹ The specific capacities that humans need to actualize the potentials inscribed in creation by the Creator, and to make use of them for the entirety of humanity, are in the human person—as the image of God. Therefore, there is a continuity of relationship between the Eden of Genesis (2.15) and the New Jerusalem of Revelation (21.2). To fracture the integrity of creation also means to shatter the good and providential intentions of God the Creator.

In a world threatened by serious environmental imbalances, produced by human beings, the divine commandment given to our foreparents "to till and keep" the Garden of Eden becomes more imperative today.

d) Creation has in and of itself, a special value. The Creator is himself good and saw the world as good, and on the other hand, it is for us a proclamation of the glory of God (Ps 18.1; Rom 1.20). Objective salvation, realized in Christ our Lord, takes in the whole world. All of creation was restored through his redeeming sacrifice (Col 1.20). Therefore through humans, creation is called to become, in the phrase of Saint Gregory of Nyssa, "the image of the image" realizing and developing itself through humans, according to the plan given by God at the creation.

e) The whole of creation is an object of the providence of God, because the creation will not return to the non-existence from which it was brought; it must be able to complete and fulfill itself. The human

³⁰C. Galeriu, "Sacrifice and Redemption," a doctoral dissertation in *Glazul Bisericesc* (1-2/1973) p. 98; Also "Creative work, the attribute of the divine image in us," *Studii Teologice* (5-8/1982), p. 309.

³¹Dumitru Staniloae, *Teologia Morala Orthodoxa* Vol. 3, (Bucharest, 1980) pp. 25-26.

person becomes a "co-worker with God" the Creator and Sustainer, by means of and working with creation in a continual action of dialogue. The result is positive only when humans participate synergistically and theandrically, responding with their actions toward creation in the same way God in his providence from the beginning has continually acted toward us.

Saints Gregory of Nyssa, Dionysios the Areopagite, and Maximos the Confessor speak of a grand divine-angelic-human-natural effort, which, through an infinite chain, unites the manner of God's providence, in the angels, in humans and in the elements of nature. The creation is led by the Creator himself, and is indissolubly bound through the Son in the Holy Spirit.³² The whole of creation "groans in travail," waiting to be set free from its bondage to decay by the children of God (Rom 8.21-22).

The Attitude of the Church toward the Integrity of Creation and the Steps It Should Take toward Its Protection

The Church has its soteriological destiny, but finding itself in this world it is also present in the great problems of humanity, contributing to their solutions through its diakonia.³³ The development of solutions to the dangers that threaten the very existence of the earth are of the utmost importance.

Every person is obliged to participate in the work of maintaining the unity and integrity of the world, the work led by divine providence. This is a condition, *sine qua non*, of perfection. But this integrity is not simply a return to the condition of creation before the fall, but also comprises the creative talents with which humans were endowed at creation and sent as workers into the world. The creation, this material world, is the province of our earthly life. It is the place where we obtain our salvation. It is the space of our encounter with God and our fellow humans.

The Church is called today, with the help of God and with the work of its servants the priests and theologians, to lead the world to the perfection conceived of in the act of creation, that nature be protected from the ecological imbalance that disfigures the image and ruptures its integrity. A great opportunity for concrete action on the part of the Church has been opened up through the development of a plan to protect the creation.

The Church's destiny is to give humanity again the dignity with

³²Constantine Voicu, "Jesus Christ — La vie du monde," A paper delivered at the Ecumenical Center in Geneva in July, 1982, p. 13.

³³A. Plamadeala, *Biserica Slujitoare* p. 340; also I. Ica, "Sensui si Specificul Ortodoxiei Romanesti, Teologia Slujirii," *Ortodoxia* (4/1974) pp. 620ff.

which the Creator had endowed it at the beginning. It works for the making of the new human according to the image of Christ. For the passions and sin deform the human person and they make the world in which they live into something inhuman. Saint Symeon the New Theologian says that through thoughtless human actions "the earth, the air, heaven, and everything under heaven is defiled."³⁴ There is need for a new international moral order to restore and rehabilitate both the human mind and heart.³⁵ Humanity, which has reached "an economic development and a moral underdevelopment" has become convinced that "knowledge without conscience means the ruin of the soul" (Rabelais).³⁶ The spiritual world must be put in order because the fundamental causes of the environmental imbalance that threaten to make the earth uninhabitable are found here. The Church has to remove the egoism, the greed, and the irresponsibility toward the creation because these causes of the ecological crisis are at the same time grave sins against nature and humanity. Our sins press down as a curse upon those areas of the earth affected by pollution, environmental imbalance, or even more seriously, the nuclear threat.³⁷ If these are not stopped, then the creation will continue to be "groaning in travail . . . in bondage to decay" (Rom 8.21-22).

The Church, by cultivating and applying Christian virtues, especially love, justice, moderation, kindness, and the others, will effectively contribute to preserving the integrity of creation. Because the perfection of the creation in God will only be realized when the passions are replaced with the love of all human beings for one another and for God.

Christ our Lord is the Savior of not only the soul, but also the body as a consequence of the integrity of creation (Col 1.20). Therefore the Orthodox Church incorporates in the body of its prayer the whole of nature which it sanctifies, for the sanctifying action of the Holy Spirit, who sanctified "the nature of the waters" at the Lord's baptism, radiates over the whole creation. This is the sense in which the Church is spoken of as being "the cosmos Christianized."³⁸ The Divine Liturgy itself has a cosmic character. The Church prays for "favorable weather, for the abundance of the fruits of the earth."

Through its preaching the Church is able to contribute to the

³⁴Romanian Philocalia, 6, p. 130.

³⁵Plamadeala, "Pacea," p. 5.

³⁶Tanase, "Umanismul si conditia umana," pp. 85, 104, 160, 252.

³⁷Galeriu, "Creative work," p. 310.

³⁸S. Bulgakov, *Orthodoxia*, trans. by N. Grosu, (Sibiu, 1933) pp. 172-74; also N. Berdiaev, *Esprit et liberté: Essai de Philosophie chrétienne* (Paris, 1933) p. 348.

education of everyone toward care and love of nature and the maintenance of a responsible life for its purity and beauty, in this way assisting the initiatives that society has taken in this direction. Christians are obliged and must work together with all persons of goodwill everywhere to preserve the creation from environmental imbalance, toward the transfiguration of the world through the transformation of the old Eden into the kingdom of God.

Concern for the creation has been the topic of many conferences and symposia held by the world Christian organizations. For example the ones held by the WCC in 1970 at Geneva; 1971 at Nemi, Italy; 1972 at Utrecht and Cardiff; 1979 at Cambridge and Boston; 1981 at Amsterdam; 1984 at Geneva; 1985 at Tampere, Finland; and the Seventh General Assembly of the WCC to be held in 1990 has established as its theme "The Integrity of the Creation." The Romanian Orthodox Church has hosted a number of ecumenical conferences that have also addressed this theme, for example in Bucharest in 1974 and in March, 1982, at the Theological Institute of Bucharest a colloquium sponsored by the European Conference of Churches had as its theme "The Groaning of Creation."³⁹

In today's situation, the Church, grounded upon divine revelation and human life, is able to open a brilliant and optimistic perspective for us: God created the world and the human person for life, not for destruction. The Savior redeemed the world "to have life abundantly" (Jn 10.10). Christian belief gives us the certainty that because of God's loving concern creation and humanity are not fruitlessly bound in sin. Creation is not only the world of our sins but is also the work of God's love. Even in this state of sin, the human person continues to be the crown of creation, because we carry the image of the ineffable glory of God, "even though we bear the marks of sin," as we sing in the holy services.

On the other hand, human intelligence and wisdom will not allow those most significant of human creations, that is, in the scientific and theological realm, to turn against humanity as a mortal danger. The modern world is capable of being respiritualized, of "domesticating technology" (Töffler) toward a harmony between *homo tehnicus* and *homo spiritualis*, for the "machine leads the human person to specialize in humanity."⁴⁰ By being relieved of servile labor, we are freed for more complex moral and intellectual activities.

Humanity needs to rediscover its ontological vocation, if not from the perspective of divine revelation, then at least from the perspective of healthy reason, and to submit all of its previous activities that

³⁹The Romanian Orthodox Church (No. 1, 1982) pp. 49-57.

⁴⁰Tanase, "Umanismul si conditia umana," pp. 84-85, 105, 160.

have had an impact on the environment to a detailed analysis and to think profoundly toward establishing for the present and the future a prudent attitude of stewardship in a unique communion, in a unique harmony for the integrity of creation and the blessedness of humanity.

To protect life through the preservation and development of creation we Christians are presented with an extraordinary responsibility that asks us what we have done up until now and what still must be done to transform and renew humanity and through this the whole of creation. In summarizing the integrity of creation, from the Orthodox perspective, we come to the following conclusions:

1. Creation was brought into existence by God the Father, was restored by God the Son, is made holy by the Holy Spirit, and finds itself, in this way, cared for by God.

2. Creation as "good," that is to say, whole, beautiful, unitary, was offered by God as a gift to the human with whom it forms total harmony.

3. The human, as a partner and collaborator with God in the world, has to maintain the integrity of creation and to contribute through his actions, in accordance with the will of God, toward its transfiguration.

4. Through sin the human has become, instead of the lord, priest, and prophet of creation, an exploiter and an impassioned thief, producing a serious ecological imbalance, yet it still remains within human potential to restore this balance.

5. The Christian faith suggests that technological and scientific progress should be accompanied by spiritual and moral progress as well, because it is important that scientific advances should be at the disposal of those with a higher ethic, because only this will serve human good and happiness.

6. The maintenance of the whole creation, which means the protection of life, needs to unite all of humanity, for this implies responsibility for our existence and that of our fellow humans, both of today and tomorrow.

7. The integrity of creation as a gift of God and as the permanent mission of the human, implies many things for our Church today:

a) Prayer for the maintenance and sanctification of creation;

b) Intensified action aimed at educating our faithful to take care of the creation and to make use of resources wisely and without waste;

c) Our total solidarity with all people of goodwill and all elements who are working to maintain the integrity of the creation;

d) The defense of the creation, as for example working toward

disarmament and peace, is a fundamental moral obligation, because this means the defense of life.

As sons and daughters of the Church, we have the sacred obligation to place in the hearts of all our fellow humans a consciousness of responsibility toward the whole creation, because in supporting life, we serve God who has created the universe and our life.

As sons and daughters of this blessed generation we should honor the whole creation with the same love as we have toward our parents and forebearers, whose earth is their bodies, and who sleep in it as the seeds of the resurrection.

We appeal to the conscience of all those who believe in Jesus Christ, the Lord of life, and call on all persons of goodwill, everywhere, to do everything they are able for the life of the world, for the maintenance of God's creation, for the well-being and blessed happiness of us and our descendants.

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Orthodox Worship in the American Context

ALKIVIADIS C. CALIVAS

THE SUBJECT OF THIS PAPER IS PART OF THE LARGER, BROADER THEME, "The Message of the Church Contextualized," which was assigned to the faculty of Holy Cross for presentation at this Third International Conference of Orthodox Theological Schools.

In the pages that follow, I shall endeavor to address three inter-related topics. First, I shall attempt to give a brief description of the context of environment in which religion moves and flourishes in America. Second, I shall discuss some particularities and characteristics of the American context, as they bear upon the ethos of the Church, with particular reference to lessons learned from the experience. Finally, by posing a series of questions, I shall endeavor to address the issues of Orthodox identity and mission in the American context.

The American Context

America is both a bold, developing experiment in political freedom and social equality as well as an enormous crucible and a magnificent mosaic.¹ It is a dynamic society in the process of being and be-

¹ The following studies were especially useful and contributed to my understanding and appreciation of this complex subject: Martin E. Marty, *The New Shape of American Religion* (New York, 1959) and *Modern American Religion*, Vol. 1 (Chicago, 1986); Will Herberg, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology* (Garden City, 1960); Peter L. Berger, *The Noise of Solemn Assemblies* (Garden City, 1961); *The Heretical Imperative — Contemporary Possibilities of Religious Affirmation* (Garden City, 1979); Andrew M. Greeley, *The Denominational Society* (Glenview, 1972); R.N. Bellah, R. Madsen, W.M. Sullivan, A. Swidler, and S. M. Tipton, *Habits of the Heart* (New York, 1985); Alice Scourby, *Third Generation Greek Americans: A Study of Religious Attitudes* (New York, 1981); Constantine Volaitis, "The Orthodox Church in the United States as Viewed from the Social Sciences," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 5 (1961) 72; Peter C. Haskell,

coming "one nation under God, with liberty and justice for all."²

America is a nation of many peoples of diverse backgrounds. The rich multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-racial fabric that constitutes our society is interwoven with certain basic principles, values, and beliefs that define the American character and shape the American dream and life. While these ideals are not always accepted universally, or always conscientiously observed, or always equally operative, in practice they are normative and relevant.

The operative force in our society according to sociologists is a system of values and principles known generally under the rubric "The American-way-of-life." As the cohesive agent that brings and binds together the disparate and diverse elements of our society, the American Way provides the people of our country with a sense of unity, despite their wide differences in national origins, faith affiliations, cultural heritages, race, class, and region.

In the last fifty years we have seen and experienced tremendous changes to the conventional images, styles, and habits of American life. Yet, despite these changes, the system of values and principles that evolved in the eighteenth century and prevailed in the nineteenth, remain largely operative in our own times. The American way continues to provide the American people with a sense of unity and national purpose, even though it is challenged, defined and redefined, interpreted and reinterpreted by each succeeding generation.

As an organic structure of ideas, standards, aspirations, and values, the American way has strong religious underpinnings. Of the several principles of social differentiation, such as ethnicity, class, and race, that are operative within the general populace, religion appears to have had the more lasting influence upon the formation of the American character. Historians and sociologists have come to recognize that religion has played a major role in the formation of American culture from the earliest period of colonization to the present. George Washington, for example, in his Farewell Address noted that, "religion and morality are the indispensable supports of political prosperity . . . the great pillars of public happiness, the firmest props of the duties of men and citizens."³

"American Civil Religion and the Greek Immigration: Religious Confrontation Before the First World War," *ibid.* 18 (1974) 166; and Philip M. Kayal, "Eastern Orthodox Exogamy and Triple Melting Pot Theory: Herberg Revisited," *ibid.* 25 (1981) 239.

²This is a phrase from the Pledge to the Flag. This pledge constitutes a promise of allegiance to the United States. It was first recited in 1892. In 1942 Congress made the pledge part of its code for the use of the flag, and in 1954 it added the words "under God" to the pledge.

³*Habits of the Heart*, p. 222.

In the following paragraphs I shall attempt to describe briefly the unfolding story of religious life in America. What follows is a bare outline of that complex and diverse history.

The early settlers were of varied national origins and religious persuasions. They imported not only their language and culture, but their confessional beliefs as well. Although the religious landscape of early America was varied, it is safe to say that it was largely Protestant and largely influenced by the spirit of pietism. The American way of life was first formed and informed by the puritan and evangelical Protestantism of the early settlers.⁴

Religious freedom was the accepted norm throughout the original colonies, and the separation of church and state became the hallmark of the American Constitution. However, the Evangelical Protestantism of the early settlers pervaded the social fabric of American life. Alexis de Tocqueville, the French social philosopher and statesman, in his book *Democracy in America*, published in two parts in 1835 and 1840, perceptively remarked, "I think I can see the whole destiny of America contained in the first Puritan who landed on these shores."⁵

As the frontiers of America began to move westward, there was a noticeable increase in denominational pluralism. By 1850 American Protestantism had already become multi-faced. Gradually, the emphasis was placed on the privatization of religion and on voluntary association. Out of this segmentation of religion a new pattern of religious life began to emerge. It was to become a basic component of the ideological heritage of America. As differences of theological understanding were leveled and swept under the cover of interdenominationalism, all religions were seen as legitimately equal and legitimately American. With the blurring of doctrinal integrity and ecclesial identity, foundations were laid for the establishment of paraecclesial societies and associations, dedicated to the advancement of various religious and social causes. Like-minded people criss-crossed denominational lines to pursue common goals and aspirations. The individualization of religion also led to the invention and acceptance of cults.

Another striking phenomenon of early American Protestantism was the revivalist movement. A succession of revivals, beginning with the Great Awakening in 1730, kept the Protestant churches in a state

³ *Habits of the Heart*, p. 222.

⁴ Marty, *The New Shape of American Religion*, p. 48; and Herberg, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew*, p. 81.

⁵ Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, George Lawrence, trans. J. P. Mayer, ed. (New York, 1969).

of fluidity throughout the nineteenth century. The evangelical crusades of present day Protestantism are reverberations of these movements.

The revivalist movements crossed denominational lines, spawned enterprises such as missionary societies, and gave rise to many reform movements, including the anti-slavery cause. The revivalist movements, emotionalism, pragmatism, and individualism were characteristics that were fused to the American-way-of-life.

As a religious and cultural force, Protestantism has shaped the American way of life. While it is no longer the preponderant religious authority in America today, nonetheless, it continues to be America's national religion. Much of the American agenda continues to be influenced by the principles and goals of American Protestantism.

At the same time, however, we are bound to acknowledge that in the last several decades especially the situation in America has been highly influenced by the process of secularization. The secularity of modern social consciousness has become progressively more assertive, challenging the influence and authority of religious faith. The attempts to limit and diminish the role of the churches in the public arena notwithstanding, a majority of Americans continue to be affiliated with one religious body or another. Thus, an earlier observation about the American reality continues to be operative, at least for the present: "a nation which made no legal provision for maintaining and supporting religion has become more religious than most nations which have a religious establishment."⁶

Other faiths besides Protestantism have contributed to the development of the American way from the earliest period. Roman Catholicism, which is the largest single church or religious body in America today, has never been without influence in our society, from the discovery of America in 1492 to the present.⁷ One measure of its influence is its many leading educational, social and religious institutions. In the last quarter century especially, through its National Conference of Bishops, Roman Catholicism has moved with greater vigor upon the national scene, to address a variety of religious, social, moral, economic, and political issues that confront the people and the nation.

Orthodoxy is a relative newcomer to America.⁸ The Church

⁶ Marty, *The New Shape of American Religion*, p. 1.

⁷ See Andrew M. Greeley, *The Catholic Experience: An Interpretation of the History of American Catholicism* (n.p., 1967), and *Ethnicity in the United States* (New York, 1974).

⁸ See Thomas FitzGerald, "Orthodoxy in the United States," in *A Companion to the Greek Orthodox Church* (New York, 1984) pp. 173-77; Constance Tarasar and John Erickson, eds. *Orthodox America 1794-1976* (Syosset, 1975); George Papaioan-

was first established at the very end of the eighteenth century around missionary outposts and tiny immigrant enclaves. Larger, successive waves of immigration began at the time of the American Civil War. By the time of World War I, there were about two hundred and fifty Orthodox parishes in the United States, serving nearly half a million people. Today, there are over four million Orthodox Christians in America and over fifteen hundred parishes. In addition, there are several monasteries, two accredited graduate schools of theology, several seminaries, an accredited undergraduate college, a large number of parochial schools, and several charitable institutions.

As the Western Europeans before them, the new Orthodox immigrants divided themselves along national lines. An early experiment at pan-Orthodox parishes could not be sustained. The realities of the old world were carried over into the new. Dioceses were established as national jurisdictions with ties abroad. However, the establishment of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in America (SCOBA) in 1960 has helped to increase and foster cooperation and common witness among our several jurisdictions.

The American context, with all its problems, challenges and possibilities, has become a testing ground for our Orthodox self-identity. We are obliged to ask and debate the question, who it is that we are as a church in America and where it is that we want to go. The historical moment is charged. We have arrived at a new, unprecedented frontier. While we strive to preserve the fundamental elements of our heritage, the imperative of the Gospel requires that we embrace America, her history, cultural diversity, and religious pluralism, with apostolic fervor. We must dare to believe that we have a place and a mission in this society. It is our task to discern this mission and to articulate it convincingly in the arena of public life.⁹

nou, *From Mars Hill to Manhattan* (Minneapolis, 1976); Theodore Saloutos, *The Greeks in the United States* (Cambridge, MA, 1964); Martin E. Marty, *Modern American Religion*, pp. 125-30; and Miltiades E. Efthimiou and George A. Christopoulos, eds. *History of the Greek Orthodox Church in America* (New York, 1984).

⁹ Though the comparison in numbers may be somewhat inflated, nevertheless the observations made by Peter L. Berger concerning Orthodox presence in America are most telling. In his book, *The Heretical Imperative*, p. 58, he noted the following: "It is interesting . . . to look at the case of Eastern Orthodoxy in America. The number of Orthodox Christians in America is roughly the same as that of the Jews. Yet Orthodoxy, unlike Judaism, has remained virtually invisible to others on the American scene, so that Will Herberg, in his by now classic study of the American religious 'triple melting pot' could describe the latter simply in terms of 'Protestant, Catholic Jew,' completely ignoring the Orthodox presence. The reasons for this,

Particularities and Characteristics of the American Context: Lessons and Responses

Embedded in the American way of life, either narrowly or broadly defined, are such things as: bravery and love of challenges; a sense of discipline, hard work, and fair play; a feeling for social justice and tolerance; a need for individual achievement and advancement; an appreciation of the good life; and a humanitarian-idealistic spirit. More precisely, however, one may point to four principles, which are the basic pillars of the American-way-of-life: democracy, individualism, pragmatism and pluralism.

The ideal of democracy in its American form is probably key to the whole system of values and standards that undergirds the American Way. It has been described succinctly as follows: "On its political side, it means the Constitution; on its economic side, free enterprise; on its social side, an egalitarianism."¹⁰ America was a new experiment in freedom. What was once the privilege of a few became the inalienable right of every citizen. A whole people were called to share in the privileges of social and individual freedoms.¹¹ Equality, freedom, opportunity, justice, duty, loyalty, and accountability are key elements of American democracy.

Individual liberty forms a very powerful appeal to Americans. American democracy has emphasized the worth of individual freedoms. Therefore, supreme value and dignity have been placed on the individual. The right of the individual to realize his life embodies the spirit of America. The pursuit of rights, privileges, improvements, and experiences centered on the self is a propelling force in American society. The individual is taken to be the norm of what is good and right in all activities and endeavors of human life.

Individualism is closely linked to pragmatism and pluralism. Variety and multiplicity are thought to be an essential category of the American-way-of-life. Pluralism, and especially religious pluralism, is considered to be both normative and legitimate. It is viewed as the primordial condition of American life. Hence, in this context it is hardly easy or even acceptable to use or speak the language of religious exclusivity.

of course, are not far to seek. While American Jews have decisively broken out of ethnic 'containment,' American Orthodox have until recently remained within a number of ethnic enclaves."

¹⁰Will Herberg, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew*, p. 78.

¹¹America was founded on the conviction and principle that a new order of things was being established. This is clear from the words inscribed on the Great Seal of the United States, "*novus ordo seclorum*."

Americans are also supposed to be *pragmatic*. They are conditioned to take private initiatives, to be competitive, practical, industrious, self-reliant, efficient, and productive. In fact, one's progress in life is usually traced through individual achievement and advancement. Pragmatic people may be highly motivated and great achievers, but they are also capable of producing plastic and artificial societies. The pragmatic approach is inherently materialistic and divisive. The uncontrolled affirmation of self tends to produce snobishness and alienation. It pulls people into various socioeconomic enclaves and creates radical class distinctions.

Let me cite some examples to show how the cultural process affects our ecclesial practice and how, in turn, the ethos of our church can inform our understanding of the nature and function of societal principles and structures.

Freedom

Freedom and democracy are the two fundamental principles of American life. They are the essential threads that hold together the fabric of American society. Americans place ultimate value on their freedoms, which are viewed mainly from a political perspective and are guaranteed by the American Constitution. However, the full meaning of freedom can be understood only from the broader perspective and within the context of the existential truth of the human being.

Freedom belongs to the nature and character of a human being because he has been created in the image of God. Man and his true life is defined by his uncreated archetype, who, according to the Greek Fathers, is Christ. Man's ultimate grandeur, in the words of Panayiotis Nellas, "is not found in his being the highest biological existence, a national or political animal, but in his being a deified animal, in the fact that he constitutes a created existence which has received the command to become a god."¹²

In the final analysis, man becomes authentically free in God, in his ability to discover, accept, pursue, enjoy and deepen the filial relationship which God confers upon him. Freedom is not something extraneous and accidental, but intrinsic to genuine human life. It is not a contrivance of human ingenuity and cleverness, but a divine gift. Man is free because his being has been sealed with the image of God. He has been endowed with and possesses divine qualities, he reflects in himself God, "who reveals himself as personal existence, as distinctiveness and freedom." The ultimate truth of man is found in his vocation to become a conscious personal existence, a god by

¹²Panayiotis Nellas, *Deification in Christ*, (Crestwood, 1987) p. 30.

grace. The elemental exercise of freedom lies in one's conscious decision and desire to fulfill his or her vocation to become a person or to deny it, to become a being of communion or an entity unto death.

Since man is able to resist and turn away from God, he can diminish and disfigure God's image in him to the extreme limits. He is able to misuse, abuse, distort, pervert, and debase the natural powers and qualities with which he has been endowed. He is capable of sin. He becomes a fraud and an impostor. He limits his life to the level of biological existence, robbing it of divine splendor and capacity. Lacking moral judgment, man is capable of turning freedom into license, rebellion, intimidation, and enslavement. The great social and political freedoms which human beings value and enjoy are rooted ultimately in the freedom of love.

Through worship the Church gives people the opportunity to learn, live, and celebrate in a dynamic, sacramental, and responsive way the existential truths of human life. At the eucharistic assembly especially, through word and ritual, people experience in faith the embracing love of God as freedom and transfiguration (2 Cor 3.17-18). Transcending the limitations of their biological existence and breaking the boundaries of their createdness they penetrate divine life. In the company of the risen Christ they lay claim to eternity. Thus, having authenticated the truth of their own existence as persons, they turn to struggle and strive for the achievement of equality, freedom, justice, and love among men.¹³

Democracy

Democracy, the second fundamental principle of American life, has had a significant impact on the American churches. Our government is a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. While it has not always been true for every American, the freedom to exercise control over one's government and one's life is a cherished principle. For Americans, democracy means that everyone can have a piece of the action. This open, democratic spirit has found its way into the life of our church in America. Among other things, it has prompted a greater and more full participation of the laity in the governance of the church. Laypeople are not passive observers, but conscious, active participants in the affairs of the Church. While this is a welcome development, it is nonetheless problematic, at least on two counts. First, it seems that we have been less than effectual in raising the consciousness of our people to the full range of principles and issues related to Orthodox ecclesiology. Second, we have an in-

¹³See John D. Zizioulas, *Being As Communion* (Crestwood, 1985) pp. 49-65.

adequate understanding of the role of the laity in the Church. As a result, for example, many parishes are governed more on the pattern of the corporate world, and much less on the model of the eucharistic assembly.

It behooves the Church, therefore, to explore and clarify in a more direct, definitive, and effective way the truths about her own identity and nature, which is fixed in her memory and is embedded in her Scriptures, tradition, canons, worship and doctrines. Also, on the basis of sound tradition, the Church is obliged to examine more closely the role of the laity in her life, with special reference to the place of women. More particularly, she needs to clarify the relation of the laity to the ordained priesthood; the role of the laity in the liturgical assembly, as well as in the governance of the Church; and its distinctive responsibility to bear witness to the Gospel in all areas of human life and endeavor.

Two other aspects of American democracy, namely the principle of accountability and the electoral process, have prompted a new awareness of the ways the Church conducts her affairs. American democracy is helping us rediscover the synodal system, by which the Church governed herself from the start (Acts 15). The synodal system, exercised on all levels of ecclesial life, aids in overcoming the danger and limitations of autocracy, ochlocracy, individualism, and uniformity. The synodal mode constitutes a unity in which the parts both condition and complement each other in a continuous process of sharing. It permits gifts to surface and bloom, and it allows authority to be exercised creatively within the bounds of mutual respect, love, and accountability.

Americans are used to choosing their leaders through a free electoral process. As a result, more and more people are raising the question and are asking to have a share in the process by which persons are identified, selected, and appointed to various offices of ecclesial authority and leadership.

The ordination rites are especially instructive in helping us understand both the meaning and the parameters of shared responsibility in the election and appointment of church officers. They help as well to explain the nature and function of the priesthood and to shed light on the hierarchal structure of the Church. It is incumbent, therefore, upon the Church to investigate these matters more closely and to organize them on the basis of sound principles and traditional practice.

Individualism

Americans are highly individualistic.¹⁴ However, individualism is a two-edged sword. Stripped of spiritual meanings, individualism can become limiting and ultimately destructive. It is capable of produc-

¹⁴See *Habits of the Heart*, pp. 142-63.

ing self-centered and self-serving people. Extreme forms of individualism are incompatible with the Gospel and the foundational principle of communion.¹⁵

Equally destructive is the opposite theory and practice of collectivism. Collectivism depreciates the value of the individual by obliterating personal distinctiveness, subordinating it to political economic systems dominated by determinism. If individualism tends towards egocentricity, fragmentation, and segregation, collectivism produces faceless, depersonalized masses.

A better, deeper, and fuller appreciation and understanding of the nature and meaning both of personhood and solidarity provide a way out from the difficulties posed by these extremes that dominate the socio-political patterns of our time. The theological principles, as well as the liturgical and monastic traditions of Orthodoxy, offer, us unique perspectives on these subjects.

The eucharistic assembly, for example, allows us to perceive and experience the transcendence of the dilemma between the individual and the community, and between locality and catholicity.

The Church does not promise us a better world or a better life. At the Eucharist she gives us a different life, by manifesting both the certainty and the possession of the Kingdom, here now and yet to come. At the eucharist the faithful discover, learn, and re-learn the nobility of their descent, and celebrate and experience "the ethos of trinitarian life imprinted upon the human being." The Holy Spirit is present and active in the eucharistic assembly to create and reveal the Church as the community of mutuality and love.

The new life imparted and bestowed upon us at baptism continues to be revealed in greater fullness and perfection at the eucharist. Individuals are being continuously formed into persons,¹⁶ who experience by faith the fact of communion with God, their fellow man, and the world. At the Eucharist each human life is in a continual process of becoming, of being reconstructed and remade into the image of God. Each person is called to realize more fully his or her real identity by becoming a sacrament, a transparency, a theophany.

¹⁵See Christos Yannaras, *The Freedom of Morality*, (Crestwood, 1984) pp. 49-64, 109-17, and 127-31; Georges Florovsky, *Christianity and Culture*, Vol. 2 (Belmont, 1974) pp. 131-42.

¹⁶For a discussion on personhood from an Orthodox perspective, see among others, the following studies: Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*; Nellis, *Deification in Christ*; Yannaras, *The Freedom of Morality*, pp. 13-27; Markos A. Siotes, *He Christianiki didaskalia peri tou anthropou os prosopou* (Athens, 1984); Paul Evdokimov, *The Sacrament of Love* (Crestwood, 1985) pp. 49-63; Kallistos Ware, "The Unity of the Human Person According to the Greek Fathers," in A. Peacocke and G. Gillette, eds., *Persons and Personality*, (London, 1987).

Each one is invited to assimilate and practice all that was learned and experienced corporately, and then to offer back to the community all that is experienced and learned in the relationships with all those who touch and enter the precincts and courtyards of one's existence.

At the Eucharist the Christian discovers afresh the authentic character of human life with its vertical and horizontal dimensions. The Eucharist reveals the eschatological existence of man. Through the Eucharist we transcend our fallenness by constantly defeating the divisions and diminutions of sin that damage and deface the image of God in us. We enter into the realm of freedom and love.¹⁷

We are obliged as a Church to help our faithful and others as well discover in the eucharistic assembly those salutary and saving truths that act as antidotes to the deleterious effects of radical individualism on the one hand and collectivism on the other.

The American Context: A Testing Ground for Orthodox Identity and Mission.

The socioreligious ethos of America, as I have attempted to describe it, has much that is highly commendable and worthy of note. Much, however, is hardly compatible with the truths of the Gospel as Orthodox Christians know and experience them.

Each succeeding generation of Orthodox immigrants has experienced a culture shock in its encounter with the American Way. More than a difference in language and custom, Orthodox immigrants were met with a difference in ethos, phronema, and faith. One can learn a language and adapt to new circumstances. It is far more difficult, however, to change a way of thinking, a way of doing, and a way of being. The Orthodox immigrants were schooled differently. They had learned the ways and habits of the heart in a different school. They valued this heritage greatly and were convinced that it must survive and be imparted to their posterity. As the heirs of this legacy, we are compelled to understand and appreciate it. We are also obliged to define and live it in our historical circumstance in accordance with our vision and responsibility to the historical process.

There are those who believe that the American Way is suspect or even corrupt. They maintain that to survive, Orthodox people are obliged to live as a remnant within artificial islands, isolated from the mainstreams of American life. This attitude, however, is inherently wrong. It is a prescription both for the transformation of the Church into a sect and for her ultimate demise as a spiritual force in our

¹⁷See John S. Romanides, "Man and His True Life," *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 1 (1954) 63, especially pp. 74-76.

society.¹⁸

No one culture is final and definitive. Father Georges Florovsky reminds us that while the Church is not of the world, she is compelled to be in the world. Though she is not identified with any one single race, society, or culture, she is nevertheless incarnated into various cultures in order to make history and anticipate the Kingdom. As Christians we are required to build and rebuild cultures.¹⁹

As Orthodox Christians in America we need not be apologetic about the fact that we carry with us cultural values that have been hammered out in places and times other than our own. This fact acts as the very reminder of our own task to be active, creative participants in the historical process.

The Church looks at herself in two ways, inwardly and outwardly. Looking inwardly, she must make certain of her own integrity. Looking outwardly, she is compelled to see the world as it really is and seek its conversion. The conversion of the world always begins to occur on the local level, in the life of one man or one community. If we are to continue to work for the salvation of the world, we must first enable the local church to reflect the realities of the new, resurrectional life. We must remember that the new world can be built only by a new man.

We are obliged to pose and ponder many questions, among which are some of the following:

How clear is our teaching and how faithful is it to our spiritual tradition? In an attempt to be relevant, are we allowing strange ideologies, questionable liturgical and devotional practices, and dubious theological currents to color our instruction and our images of God, his church, and his world? Are we unwittingly diluting our spiritual identity in ways that compromise or nullify our authenticity? How much ground has been given up to the secular mode of living and doing business in the Church? Is what is happening in our parishes today in concert and conformity with the mind of Christ? Is church life organized in a manner that unites the faithful dynamically in the deeper reality that lies beyond us, the Holy Trinity? Is the Orthodox family and parish a citadel and vanguard for God? To what extent do we make the Church an oasis erected by God in the midst of human suffering, disorder, and sinfulness? To what extent do we see ourselves as "a peculiar people, a holy nation, a royal priesthood" (1 Pt 2.9)?

¹⁸See Alexander Schmemmann, "That East and West May Yet Meet." In Peter L. Berger and Richard J. Neuhaus, eds. *Against the World for the World: The Hartford Appeal and the Future of American Religion* (New York, 1976) pp. 126-37; *Church, World, Mission* (Crestwood, 1979) pp. 193-208.

¹⁹Florovsky, *Christianity and Culture*, pp. 9-30.

How does all this play itself out in our liturgical assemblies, the classroom, the social hall, the meeting room, the liturgy, and after the liturgy both in our homes and in the marketplace? To what extent is Christ's self-giving love both the source and the power that sustains and nourishes our lives in a communion of freedom and love? How seriously do we take the dominical command to feed the hungry, clothe the poor, heal the sick, and reach out to those who live on the edges of life? How committed are we to the task of living and proclaiming the Gospel in power?

The theory that America is a melting pot no longer seems to be in vogue. Sociologists are pointing more and more to the pluralistic character of our society. Yet, while America is indeed a nation of many people of diverse racial, ethnic, religious, and social backgrounds, who are free to hold and cultivate their languages and customs, no cultural tradition is able to remain completely autonomous and unaffected by the lure of the American Way. The process of Americanization is inevitable. Acculturation becomes easier with each succeeding generation.

My own life, like those of countless others in similar circumstance, both illustrates and embodies the realities of Orthodox people in America. Born in a small village in Northern Epiros, a martyred region whose people are ethnic Greeks, though their land comprises the southern portion of the modern state of Albania, I came to America at the age of five. Consciously, I carried with me the experiences of a little village boy. Unconsciously, but just as surely, I carried the marks of the heritage that shaped my being: the Greekness of my Orthodoxy and the Orthodoxy of my Greekness.

In time, however, I became an American—just as American as my next door neighbors who are fourth and fifth generation Americans. In America ethnic identities first recede, then they blur, and finally they blend into the landscape of American life. This does not mean that ancestries are shunned and forgotten. They are simply remembered and lived in a different way.

While I am an American just like my neighbors, I am also a different American. My identity has been conditioned by my ancestral heritage and especially by my Orthodox faith. Americans identify themselves less by ethnicity and more by their faith affiliation. The most distinguishing mark between me and the people on my street is the place in which each of us has chosen to worship.

As an Orthodox Christian and a priest, I find myself at a frontier. Behind me is a community with a long rehearsed tradition. Before me lie endless opportunities. It is my task to cross over every frontier, without denying or betraying my past. I cannot abandon the

challenge of the moment for the fear of change. This would be a clear betrayal of my mission. But I cannot abandon my past either, for that would make me rootless. The task is formidable. What of the past do I keep? What of the present is becoming to me? What of the past do I remember, should remember, or rediscover? What in the present is compatible and suitable to my way of life? What threatens that life? Or what have I accepted unwittingly into my home and my parish as innocent, only to find that it is harmful and disruptive? Does being traditional mean to be rigid and inflexible, or open and embracing? Does being relevant mean being fashionable? Or, does it mean to be discerning and therefore willing to exercise judgment?

The impact of Orthodoxy on the American way of life remains to be judged and measured. It is only within the last fifty years that the Orthodox Church has emerged as a viable spiritual force within the spectrum of religious bodies in America. The full unequivocal commitment of the Orthodox Church to meet the challenges and opportunities presented to her, both now and in the future, awaits a more precise clarification and decision. If Orthodoxy is to become more than a marginal contributor to the system of values and principles that form the American way, the Church is obliged to rethink her priorities and to reconsider and reconstruct her tasks in relation to her own internal development, as well as to her distinct role and mission in America.

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Peace in a Nuclear Context

STANLEY S. HARAKAS

CONSCIOUSLY ADDRESSING THE ISSUE OF THE CONTEXTUALIZATION of the Orthodox Christian faith allows us at once to verify a consistent, permanent, and ongoing witness to truth in its fullness, while at the same time witnessing to its concrete and specific incarnation in varying and changing historical and social realities. Of necessity, this contextualized "incarnation" always is limited, finite, and less than full or complete. The fullness of the kingdom is eschatological and not historical. Nevertheless the incarnational dynamic of Christianity demands that its values be embodied as much as possible in the specific and concrete realities of every age, place, time, and context. This is the thesis of this presentation on the theme "Peace in a Nuclear Context."

In this brief presentation on the issue of peace in a nuclear context, I have decided to approach the topic normatively from the perspective of the permanent value of peace in Orthodox Christian teaching, while showing how the concern for peace has responded in different ways to concrete historical contexts. The theme of peace in a nuclear context will be seen as one more case of this incarnational approach. Throughout, I will also seek to show that one of the operational concerns in this incarnational approach is concern with consequences.

This paper is therefore divided into three parts: (1) Peace As a Chief Christian Value; (2) The Contextualization of Peace and the Military; and (3) Peace and the Nuclear Context.¹

¹ I have based the first and second parts of this paper on my own writings on the topics of war and peace. Specific references should be sought in these writings listed in chronological order of publication: "The Morality of War," *Orthodox Synthesis: The Unity of Theological Thought*, ed. Joseph J. Allen (Crestwood, 1981) ch. 5; "Foundations of Orthodox Christian Social Visions," *Diakonia*, 18 (1983) 178-88; "The N. C. C. B. Pastoral Letter, the Challenge of Peace: An Eastern Orthodox

Peace As a Chief Christian Value

The approach of the Orthodox Christian tradition to the issue of peace, from the Bible to the present day, is quite broad, for peace is used as one of several metaphors of the whole Christian experience and world-view. Space allows only a few examples from the authoritative tradition to support this observation concerning the centrality of peace for Orthodox Christianity.

Christians did not create the concern for peace. For the Greeks, the use of the term "peace," *eirene*, was primarily to describe the interlude between wars. Not surprisingly, the Romans added to the meaning of their equivalent word *pax* legal implications, illustrated by phrases such as "a treaty of peace" and "conditions of peace." In the Old Testament the Hebrew term *shalom* took on many facets of meaning. In one sense it means "well-being" in a material sense. It was applied both to the state of being of individuals and to the relationship among nations. It came to be applied both to inner dispositions and to covenants between peoples and nations. It is important to note that for the Jews, *shalom* is always a divine gift when it is genuine. Its total expression however can only occur eschatologically. Thus one of the names for the messianic figure in Proto-Isaiah is "Prince of Peace."

In the Septuagint, the Greek term *eirene* is used to convey both the idea of this-worldly well-being and ultimate and full salvation. It continues to convey the idea of the absence of war among nations. The source of all senses of the concept of peace is God. Concurrently, in rabbinic literature there is the development of the application of the term *shalom* to inter-personal relations. Many think that for the rabbis "peacemaking" took on the centrality which *agape* came to have for Christians. The inner-dispositional and personal experience of peace is emphasized in some of the Deutero-canonical and Apocryphal writings, where the opposite of peace is neither strife, nor war, but the "judgment of God." Peace exists when the righteous are free of the condemning judgment of God.

In the New Testament we find a gathering of these meanings depending on the specific texts: salvation, concord among people, and the inner, personal condition. Space does not permit the development of all these perspectives of the broad and full New Testament understanding of peace. For our purposes in this essay, however, we need to highlight some perspectives unique to the New Testament.

Response," *Peace in a Nuclear Age: The Bishop's Pastoral Letter in Perspective*, ed. Charles J. Reid, Jr. (Washington, 1986), ch. 16; "The Teaching on Peace in the Fathers," *Un Regard Orthodoxe Sur La Paix* (Chambésy-Geneva, 1986) pp. 32-47.

First, *eirene* summarizes the whole eschatological vision of the salvation and divinization of humanity. The announcement of the angels that Jesus had been born to bring "peace on earth," is neither limited to or primarily speaking about social or political peace. It is a soteriological summary word. Secondly, peace is the normal state of things under God. The opposite of God's peace is disorder. "God is not a God of confusion but of peace," Saint Paul says in 1 Corinthians 14.33. Thirdly, the New Testament relates the concept of *eirene* closely with the dynamic salvific concept of *zoe*, i.e., life, which is one of the summary words for the consequence of the saving work of Christ, the radical opposite of *thanatos*, i.e., death.

Because Christ is "the King of Peace" (Heb 7.2), he brings *katallage*, i.e., reconciliation between sinful mankind and God. Consequently, the kingdom of God is a granting of both external peace and inner peace. The kingdom, says Saint Paul in Romans, is "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit" (14.17).

Consequently, Christians are enjoined to "lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly, and respectful in every way" (1 Tim 2.2) and to "keep the peace" within the body of believers (Rom 12.18) as well as with all people wherever possible (2 Cor 13.11). Most significantly, Christ calls blessed those who are "peacemakers" (Mt 5.9).

This inclusive approach to peace is continued in the patristic tradition. A library of quotations is available to us to emphasize the centrality of peace as a value in the patristic corpus. The themes that peace is from God, that inner peace is an essential fruit of Christian living, expressing itself in relationship to others, that peace is a goal for society and nations, and that Christians are to work for peace pervades the patristic mindset. The importance of peace in patristic thought might be illustrated by two statements of Saint Basil. In the *Homily on the Psalms* he teaches that "he who seeks peace, seeks Christ, for he is the peace," and when commenting in one of his letters on the Lord's farewell granting of peace to his disciples, he makes a personal confession regarding the importance of peace: "I cannot persuade myself without love to others, and without, as far as it rests with me, peaceableness toward all, I can be called a worthy servant of Christ."²

The purpose of all this was not to provide an exhaustive discussion of peace, but to emphasize its centrality as a value in the tradition which we as Orthodox call authoritative. Absent are theological treatments of peace as divine name and attribute and of the recurring emphasis of peace in the eucharistic and liturgical life of Orthodoxy. Nevertheless, the point is to emphasize that peace is a central and

² Letter 203, 2.

key value of the tradition. How this value addresses concrete historical situations, that is, how it has been contextualized, is the subject of the second part of this presentation.

The Contextualization of Peace and the Military

Beginning with the position that peace is a central Christian value, the effort of the Church to address concrete sociohistorical situations, and wherever possible to incarnate its vision of life in them, is an exercise in describing several phases of contextualization. My main effort here is to indicate that one of the major elements in each case has been a concern with consequences, both on the Christians as well as on the historical realities. The focus is on the issue of the military and the war function of the state.

The Context of the Pagan Roman Empire

Twentieth century studies of the stance of the Church to peace and war, beginning with Harnack's *Militia Christi* and continuing with Cecil J. Cadoux's *The Early Christian Attitude to War*, and more recently, Roland Bainton's *Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace* held to the view that the Church, on the basis of Christ's teaching was totally opposed to war or military activity of any kind, that it held to a thorough-going pacifistic denial of any sort of military activity. For those holding to this view, the negative attitude about Christians serving in the army was due exclusively to the inherent pacifism of Christianity.

This view tended to minimize and explain away elements in Scripture and in the Ante-Nicene patristic tradition which seemed to accord to the state peace-keeping and defensive military activity. There has come on the scene in contemporary studies a different view. A number of scholars such as John Helgeland, Robert Daly, Louis J. Swift, and Alexander Webster have challenged this view.³

While the primacy of peace and peace-making in the Christian value system is never doubted, these scholars recognize that the maintenance of order and the exercise of military activity by the state for purposes of enforcing justice and protecting the body politic from external attack are also accepted values in the Pre-Constantinian

³ "Christians and the Roman Army: A. D. -337," *Church History*, 43 (1974) 149-63; "The Early Church and War: The Sociology of Idolatry," *Peace in a Nuclear Age*, ch. 3; John Helgeland, Robert J. Daly, and J. Patout Burns, *Christians and the Military: The Early Experience* (Philadelphia, 1985); Alexander F. C. Webster, "The Canonical Validity of Military Service by Orthodox Christians," *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, 23 (1978) 257-81; and "Varieties of Christian Military Saints: From Martyrs Under Caesar to Warrior Princes," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, 24 (1980) 3-35.

church. The opposition to service by Christians in the Roman military establishment had less to do with a supposed pacifism as with the specific context of Roman military life. In his article "The Early Church and War: The Sociology of Idolatry" John Helgeland pointed to two factors which made it impossible for the Ante-Nicene church to encourage Christian participation in the Roman military. The first was the intimate relationship of pagan religious rites with army life, and the second was the "death culture" of Roman society, embodied in the army's involvement in the gladiatorial games.⁴

In the first case the issue was idolatry; in the second it was a celebration of violence in a militaristic sentiment. Idolatry was incongruent with confession of the lordship of Christ; the militaristic mind-set of the society was in contrast with the whole world view of the first Christians. Helgeland is convincing when he comments: "It is small wonder, then, that so many Church Fathers should have criticized Christian involvement with the military and condemned the games in the same breath. . . . This is an explanation of why we find an objection to the idolatrous nature of the Roman army on the one hand and not one explicit comment, on the other, about having to kill in the defense of the Empire. While admitting the legitimate necessity of defense, these writers objected strenuously to the 'death culture'" of the Roman Empire. In my view, it must also be added that even the defense of the nation through military activity was considered by the Fathers to be a "necessary evil," not a moral good in itself.⁵

If this is indeed the correct description of the situation which faced the Christians *vis-à-vis* the Roman pagan military establishment, then opposition to participation in the army was not based on an *a priori* pacifism, but on the consequences of what impact it would have on the Christian. The idolatrous "army religion" was pervasive and its corroding influence would either undermine loyalty to the Lord Jesus or would lead to martyrdom. Even if one were to escape these fates, participation in the army meant contributing to the idea that "death and violence . . . were the path to a strong, viable society," the "death culture" which stood in such contract to the all inclusive Christian vision of peace. Given the context of the Roman pagan army and the invidious consequences which it would bring upon Christians, the Christian response was one of almost total rejection of Christian participation in the army, even as its good purposes could be applauded and supported from without by Christians with their prayers, as Origen and Tertullian argued.

⁴ *Christians and the Military*, p. 21.

⁵ Stanley S. Harakas, *Towards Transfigured Life: "Theoria" of Eastern Orthodox Ethics* (Minneapolis, 1983) ch. 9.

I believe this is the pattern for the contextualization of the Christian approach to the military in subsequent periods. Illustrative is the case of Byzantium.

The Context of Byzantium

This understanding makes sense, with the change initiated by Constantine and the efforts at the development of a Christian Byzantine commonwealth. The acceptance of a "Christian" army for the defense against enemy nations and maintenance of barbarian tribes with scarcely a second thought by church councils or Church Fathers is not, as some pacifists contend, a massive abandonment of pristine Christian pacifism, but an acknowledgement that with the recognition of Christianity by the Empire, a radical change had taken place in the context in which the Church was living and had an opportunity to work. The pagan connection to the army was in principle and in practice no longer in place. Christian soldiers were not required to make pagan sacrifices or celebrate pagan Gods. Eusebios' celebration of the adoption of Christian values by the state was, to be sure, overly optimistic and generalized, but in principle the heart of the empire was no longer a "death culture." Byzantine culture was now focused on an effort to incarnate the Christian faith into the life of the Empire.

Because neither idolatry nor militarism stood in the way, the idea of a Christian soldier was possible. But this was far from a celebration of war. Evidence from canon law on the readmission of soldiers to holy Communion, the prohibition of military involvement for the clergy, the general absence of a crusade mentality, the development of Byzantine military tactics which sought to avoid battle wherever possible, with preference for negotiations, or tribute, or ruse and deceit all point to the development of a tolerance of military activity as a necessary evil, rather than as a positive good. The absence of a "just war theory" in the East, I believe, is a continuing witness to the Church's strong bias for peace as a central Christian value.

Yet, the acceptance of a military establishment and the dignity and influence accorded to it is also a reality. Here, too, the consequences are important. The defense of the innocent and the protection of the people and the commonwealth from death, destruction, and ravage is a consideration of consequences and a recognition of the truth that the gentlest of persons or nations cannot live in peace if it does not please evilly motivated neighbors (to paraphrase the playwright Schiller). Nevertheless, with the substantive change in context the teaching of the Church regarding peace values and military changed without an essential change in the Church's foundational bias for peace and peace making.

Tourkokratia and Revolutions

Space here does not permit a further similar discussion of the stance of the Church in regard to military activities during the period of the *Tourkokratia* and in the face of numerous national revolutions which followed. A realistic concern for the preservation of life in the first case, only to be reluctantly put aside in the cases of the Neomartyrs, also shows a concern for consequences in that different context. Only when the geopolitical presuppositions permitted the values of freedom and self-determination to have some possibility of success did the local Orthodox churches come to the fore in supporting revolutionary causes. Here, too, the action of the Church in specific contexts was governed in part by a concern for consequences.

Peace and the Nuclear Context

It must be clear now what the pattern of my treatment of the issue of the Christian approach to military activity must take and in fact is taking today among the Orthodox, whether they are citizens in the First, Second, or Third Worlds.

The nuclear context has given a new form to the high value which the Church maintains for peace. The response within the Orthodox Church, and of course, outside of it as well, has been not to deny the need for defense and protection of the innocent, but rather to raise this up to the level of global concern. Consequence arguments reach their apogee in this concern. A careful examination of the biblical and patristic corpus shows that in the process of incarnating its highest spiritual values in concrete situations and in historical contexts, numerous factors are taken into consideration. Among these are existing laws and rules, intents, motives, appropriate means, other varied values and dis-values, and assessments of the situation itself. Not the least of these considerations for the incarnation of core Christian values, such as peace, is a consideration of consequences.

This consideration is most evident in the effort to contextualize the Christian concern for peace in an age of nuclear weaponry. It is the protection of the whole of humanity from threat of nuclear conflagration that has lead to fearsome warnings against the proliferation of nuclear weapons, for reasoned and balanced reductions of nuclear arms, and for the re-emphasis of the Christian call to a ministry of peacemaking. All this in the name of the Christian value of peace. Witness the following two statements, which for the moment will remain unidentified as to their source.

...The proper understanding of Christian Commandments can justify the moral conditions that were applied to waging a

“just war” in the past. . . . Nevertheless, the living spirit of Holy Scriptures and tradition does not allow us to make our conclusions from the Church’s tradition of the past absolute and dead. A nuclear age is an age of such radical changes in the outer life of humanity that we have no right to be uncritical in applying yesterday’s evaluation to today. This concerns first of all our new perception of war. Since 1945, when nuclear weapons appeared, humanity has entered a basically new period of its history—a nuclear age. . . . The consequences of a possible nuclear war are not only terrifying because an unpredictable number of people will be killed. They will be no less terrible for the survivors. . . . Proceeding from the above, we resolutely declare: today’s reality demands that such measures should be taken immediately as to completely deliver humanity from the nuclear threat.

The second passage, also from an Orthodox source, is the following:

[1] . . . It is a fundamental Christian axiom that there is only one war which a Christian can fight: that “against the principalities, against the powers, against the rulers of the darkness of the world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Eph 14.9). . . . Christ blesses the peacemakers and calls them the children of God (Mt 5.9) and the Bible further exhorts us to “follow after those things which make for peace;” (Rom 4.19)- . . . Peace is the goal and hope of mankind. . . . (We resolve to) dedicate ourselves anew to the cause of peace and condemn and abhor all armed aggression. . . . (In order) to prevent the ultimate destruction of mankind we call upon the leaders of all nations to exert every effort to de-escalate the arms race, and work ceaselessly toward the goal of peace. . . . [2] (We call for) meaningful and substantive negotiations to stop the increase of nuclear weaponry, to reduce nuclear armaments, to resume serious negotiations to eliminate their use.”

Both of these statements are part of larger and more nuanced documents. Both, however, acknowledge a changed situation, a new context for thinking about war and peace. Both are concerned as Christians speaking out of the fundamental commitment to peace to acknowledge that the new nuclear context demands a new approach to war, which is essentially a position of nuclear pacifism and all that it implies. The first statement read above is excerpted from the February 7, 1986, “Message of the Holy Synod of the Russian Or-

thodox Church on War and Peace in a Nuclear Age.”⁶ The second statement was from documents of the 1984 Clergy-Laity Congress of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America.⁷

Conclusion

Behind each of the applications of the Christian value of peace in the public sphere as it relates to military activity is an assessment of the context within which the Church seeks to practically and realistically incarnate its value system. Part of the input in determining what that specific embodiment should be is a concern with consequences. As it faced the pagan Roman military system, it had little alternative to drawing a sharp line of demarcation, because of the foundational dangers of apostasy and because it could not support a totally antithetical “death culture” as embodied in the pagan Roman army. A crucial factor was an assessment of the negative consequences upon Christians and their world-view of such involvement.

In Byzantium, the context changed enough so as to allow the church to perceive military activity in a different light — primarily as a defense system. Nevertheless, as it tolerated military activity, it continued to draw lines in its inner life which indicated its primary commitment to the value of peace, and its understanding of war as a “necessary evil.” Again, the assessment of consequences, which valued military activity for the protection of life, culture, justice, and the innocent, was a major contributing factor to the position of the Church toward war-making, which permitted a qualified support for military activity. The Church could do this because the threat of apostasy was no longer present, nor were the aspirations of Byzantium overtly anti-spiritual.

In the present nuclear context which threatens the destruction of the world as we know it, the interests of peace clearly have led Orthodox people to once again revise their perspective as an outgrowth of an assessment of the consequences arising from the nuclear arms race and the possible nuclear destruction of the world.

Consequences have always had a place in Orthodox moral reasoning, as an examination of any major issue of concern in the biblical and patristic tradition will show. While the commitment to peace and peace-keeping is the steady constant in the Church’s value system and theological vision, the changing contexts of history have caused

⁶ *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, 6 (1986) 2-18, Sections 2.10, 2.11 and 2.37.

⁷ (1) Delegate Workbook: 27th Biennial Clergy-Laity Congress (New York, 1984); and (2) from the section of the “Report of the Committee on Church and Society” titled “Nuclear Armaments and Nuclear War.”

the Church to vary its response in the light of perceived consequences. The assessment of the consequences of a nuclear holocaust demands that the central affirmation to peace in the Christian teaching and vision express itself today as a rejection of nuclear weaponry. My argument is that this is an appropriate stance for the Church to take in the light of its central commitment to peace, and in the light of the evident consequences of the nuclear context of the twentieth century.

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Prologue to the Third International Conference of Orthodox Theological Schools

ARCHBISHOP IAKOVOS

THIS VOLUME OF STUDIES FOCUSES ON THE THEME "ICON AND KINGDOM: Orthodoxy Faces the Twenty-first Century." The papers which are included in this volume aim to bring into focus the concerns and positions for a long overdue thrust of Orthodox theology into the arena of religion and theological debate already visible and developing as we enter the twenty-first century.

The papers presented at the Third International Conference of Orthodox Theological Schools were delivered on the occasion of the completion of fifty years of service by Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology. These fifty years are characterized by the intense labor, struggle, and progressive development of the members of the faculty of Holy Cross School of Theology, who together with the other contributing theologians to this volume offer here a record of their soul and spirit search vis-à-vis the third millenium of Christianity, one which appears itself to be of shallow spirit and in deep confusion.

Dogmas, doctrines, canons, traditions, and theological visions will continue to be questioned by a world which will further scrutinize and challenge by its secular logic and rationalism their importance and relevance to an age which will be even more dominated by high technology and anthropocentric sophistication. Virtues and principles of the believers will be cynically devalued and ridiculed by what Saint Paul calls the "principalities and powers" of modern science.

I hope and pray that the much needed insights of the theologians who contributed to the Conference "Icon and Kingdom" will assist us all in understanding and preparing ourselves with a true knowledge and comprehension of the Orthodox theological tradition. By this re-discovery and fresh dedication to the truths of Orthodox worship,

belief, and action, a new assertion of Orthodoxy into the very fiber of the twenty-first century society will be possible.

Archbishop Iakovos

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Radical Honesty

THOMAS FITZGERALD

CHRIST IS IN OUR MIDST!

Our Lord Jesus Christ has said to us: "I am the way, the truth and the life" (Jn 14.6). With these simple but very profound words, the Lord both proclaims the good news of salvation and invites us to respond to him. As the incarnate Lord, he calls us to see him as the way, to honor him as the truth, and to receive him as the life. This is salvation!

It is with these words of the Lord in mind that I wish to call your attention today to the virtue of radical honesty.

I would suggest to you that radical honesty is the fruit of genuine repentance. Our Lord began his public ministry with a call to repentance. He said: "The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the Gospel" (Mk 1.14). The recognition of the mighty acts of God requires that we freely become receptive to his deeds through a genuine change by which we are willing to turn our lives to him.

We know that repentance means a change of heart, a change of orientation. It is a fundamental repudiation of self-centeredness and an affirmation of God-centeredness. It is a declaration that we belong to God and that we are most fully human when we live our life in fellowship with him. It is the willingness to let our life be fully transparent to his presence.

If our repentance is genuine, it means that we are able to assess ourself and our values with honesty. It means that we are able to assess honestly our relationship with God. It means that we can honestly assess our relationship with others. The more we acquire the "mind of Christ" (1 Cor 2.16) and have our roots deeply implanted in him (Col 2.7), the more difficult it is for us to be dishonest. The closer we grow to Christ the more honest we become. Only then are we able

to bring forth fruits with an honest and good heart (Lk 8.15).

Delusion of self is very dangerous for the Christian, and especially for the theologian. If we are called to speak to others about God, we are also called by the Lord to be persons of integrity ourselves. We are not meant to be fragmented. We are meant to be whole. There is meant to be a continuity between our public life and our private life. Our entire life is meant to be reflective of God's actions. This wholeness is rooted in the ability to see ourselves as God sees us and not as we would wish to be seen.

It is for this reason that Saint Gregory of Nyssa tells us: "Our greatest protection is self-knowledge, and to avoid the delusion that we are seeing ourselves when we are in reality looking at something else. This is what happens to those who do not scrutinize themselves. What they see is strength, beauty, reputation, political power, abundant wealth, pomp, self-importance, bodily stature, a certain grace of form or the like, and they think that this is what they are. Such persons make very poor guardians of themselves: because of their absorption in something else, they overlook what is their own, and leave it unguarded. The most secure protection for our treasure is to know ourselves: each one of us must know himself as he is and distinguish himself from all that he is not"¹

When I read the story of the publican and the pharisee, I am struck by the honesty of the one and the dishonesty of the other. The tax collector stood before God in a radically honest way. He truly saw himself as he was; and he honestly spoke to God about his condition. The pharisee stood before God in a dishonest manner. He was unwilling truly to see himself, his relationship with God, and his relationship with others, most immediately with the tax collector whom he castigated. The pharisee did not know himself. He sought to "impress" God with what he thought were accomplishments. While the pharisee seemed to pray, his prayer had the ring of dishonesty about it.

The challenges which we face today as Christians who are theologians demand that we live, speak, pray, and relate with others with honest intention which reflects our true knowledge of self. We need to be more like the tax collector and less like the pharisee. Can a believer in Christ profess an allegiance with any type of falsehood? Can a theologian — a person who speaks about God — be a party to any type of falsehood?

It seems to me that we need to be more honest about our selves, both as followers of Christ and as theologians. Are we theologians simply because we have survived the snares of the academic jungle?

¹ *Commentary on the Canticle, Sermon 1.*

Are we theologians simply because we have been given an assignment by some other member of the Church? Are we theologians simply because we knew the right people or had the right connections?

Certainly, we need to understand that being a theologian is a vocation within the Church. The theologian is one who has been gifted by the Spirit with the charisma of teaching the faith. This charisma is given to us not for our self-aggrandizement. Rather, it is given to each of us so that the entire body of the faithful may benefit. The gift given to one is given for the enrichment of all (1 Pet 4.10).

I am sure that all of us would agree with the dictum: "A theologian is one who prays." And yet I wonder how many of us take this statement seriously. Is our prayer like that of the pharisee? Do we stand before God with arrogance and proceed to tell the Lord of our accomplishments? Or, do we come before God as the tax collector did with honesty and with humility, desiring to hear what the Lord has to teach us?

Sadly, many of us are more like the pharisee than the tax collector when it comes to prayer. We may know many prayers "by heart." We may have the technical knowledge of the various church services. We may know the historical development of the services. We may even be able to cite many of the patristic references on prayer. But are we people of prayer? To know about the "things of God" is not necessarily the same as knowing the living God.

Indeed, many of us are more like Martha than like Mary. We find that we are constantly running here and there, distracted by many things (Lk 10.40). We may claim that we are "working for the Lord" as we travel from one conference to another. However, the focus of our attention is often more centered upon our accomplishments than upon the message of the Gospel. Indeed, it seems that we often neglect the one thing needful (Lk 10.42). We neglect to stand honestly in the presence of the Lord and be willing to listen to his words, before we speak to others.

Christ is our way, our truth, and our life. Christ calls us to be honest in our assessment of our self.

Radical honesty is also required in the way in which we understand theology. As theologians, we are called to teach as best we can the truth of the faith. Yet this requires that we recognize the enormity of our task. We need to approach our task with both humility and honesty. This means that we recognize our own personal limitations as well as the limitations of our language. It also means that we honestly recognize that we stand before the mystery of Christ and his Gospel (Eph 6.19). There is always a sense in which we are striving to speak about the "unspeakable" and to conceive that which

is "inconceivable."

I am reminded of the poignant remark of Saint Basil the Great who said: "We confess that we know what is knowable of God and yet what we know reaches beyond our comprehension."²

Saint Basil could not be accused of being a man without convictions or intellectual ability. Yet, in this simple observation, it seems to me that Saint Basil was being radically honest with himself and with others. He had come to sense his own human limitations in the face of God's mighty acts.

Radical honesty is also required in our research and in our teaching. In our zeal to do theology,¹ we have no right to ignore historical facts, to distort historical truth, to misrepresent the teachings of another tradition, or to ridicule another person. Moreover, we certainly do not have a right to create controversy so that our own name or our writings will become more prominent. On the contrary, the work of theology demands that we undertake this service to the Church with a spirit of honesty which enables us to seek the truth wherever it may lead and a spirit of humility which enables us to respect the opinions of others.

Yes, we are often citing the fathers and mothers in our teaching of the faith. But, it seems to me that often we fail to understand their motivation or to comprehend their methodology. Their motivation was to proclaim Christ. And, their methodology was to use the limited language and thought-form of their day in order to proclaim the reality of the risen Lord. Like John the Baptist who heralded the "Lamb of God" and the pious women who were the first to proclaim that Christ had risen, the fathers and mothers centered their words upon the reality of the risen Christ. For them, culture, language, tradition, and terminology existed to serve the proclamation of the living Lord. It seems to me that, in their best moments, the saints truly recognized that the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath (Mk 2.27). To put it very simply, the fathers and mothers recognized that theology was meant to assist us in our progress in holiness.

Christ is our way, our truth, and our life. Christ calls us to be honest in our understanding of theology and in the manner in which we do theology.

Radical honesty is also required in our assessment of the challenges which we face in our mission to proclaim Christ and to close the gap between what we profess to believe and the harsh reality of our ecclesiastical life. We are confronted with the preeminent challenge to enable the treasures of our faith to be expressed in and through

² *Epistle 235.*

all aspects of our ecclesiastical life. We must bridge the gap between what we say as Orthodox and what we actually do as the Orthodox Church. Our praxis must be congruent with our authentic teaching.

We are all prone to critique the theological and organizational deficiencies of other Christian groups. Yet we have a very difficult time in honestly recognizing our own shortcomings. Have we forgotten that the Lord was most critical of the religious leaders who were hypocritical (Mt 23.15)?

We are all prone to identify in other Christian groups the sins of clericalism, of sexism, and/or racism. Yet we have a very difficult time in honestly recognizing these sins among ourselves. How easily we are able to see the speck in the eye of persons in other traditions, but we fail to see the boulder in our own eye (Mt 7.3).

We claim to be the Church of Christ. And indeed we are! Yet we demonstrate so little concern for the poor, for the sick, for the oppressed, and for those who are victimized. Have we forgotten that our Lord has said that his disciples will be known by their fruits (Mt 7.16)?

It seems that many of us think that because we are "of the Church" there can be no shortcomings among us. Yes, the Church is the Body of Christ. But it is also composed of men and women who have the freedom to turn away from the Lord even in the exercise of ministerial and ecclesial responsibilities.

We need to remember that the tradition of the Desert Fathers and Mothers clearly shows us that sins which are not named and identified cannot be healed. The identification of sin is a prerequisite for our ultimate healing and growth. If we were more honest with ourselves, we would not be so reluctant to admit the presence of sins and shortcomings among us. Such honesty is of absolute necessity if we wish to experience fully the healing which comes from the Lord.

Christ is our way, our truth, and our life. Christ calls us to be honest in our assessment of the challenges which our church faces today.

My brothers and sisters! These observations are not my own. They are the concerns which many of us have. They are the concerns which we express to one another in moments of true honesty.

We have before us in these coming days some valuable opportunities to pray together, to reflect together, and to enjoy genuine fellowship with each other. As we do this, we are marking the beginning of another ecclesiastical year. It is a year which is centered upon the resurrection of our Lord, who is our way, our truth, and our life (Jn 14.6).

So let us remember those first theologians who proclaimed the risen Lord. They were the pious women! When they arrived at the

tomb, they found that the stone had been rolled away. And they learned that the Lord had risen. In that moment of honesty, the women learned a most important truth. They learned not to seek the living among the dead (Lk 24.5)! They learned that Christ was not a lifeless body . . . not a relic of the past . . . not a piece of property . . . not a religious heirloom. Their honest love for the Lord led them to the tomb. And their honest love for the Lord enabled the women to declare to others that he was risen!

Christ is in our midst!

To him be all glory, honor, and worship, together with his eternal Father and the all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

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Search for Peace

PLATON IGUMNOV

MORE THAN FORTY YEARS HAVE PASSED SINCE THE MOMENT A NUCLEAR bomb was dropped, the moment when humanity entered the nuclear age and faced a real and dangerous threat of a world thermonuclear war. It was the very process of increasing and perfecting the systems of nuclear weapons, which took place during the last decades, that created a threat to the existence of human civilization. At the same time, different international peace agreements were signed, thanks to the achievements of peace-loving forces, which created, in the whole world, a flash of hope promising an irreversible process of detente and nuclear disarmament. In the name of preserving universal peace and security, the good will of nations and states was translated into a series of mutual agreements. A great achievement for peace-loving forces was the international agreement, signed in August 1963, in Moscow, banning nuclear tests in atmosphere, space, and underwater. The meaning of this agreement, which was implemented in October 1963, is its protection of our planet from the contamination of the waste products of nuclear tests. It is important to note that the Soviet Union has been steadfastly advocating the ban of underground nuclear tests. In 1985 the Soviet Union presented the world with a program of complete nuclear disarmament in stages, a program which should be achieved by the end of our century. This proposal acquired a high and significant meaning for the Christian churches of the world.

In the year 2000, mankind will be celebrating the 2000th anniversary of the Incarnation and nativity of God the Word, the Lord and Savior of the world, Jesus Christ. We know that, in the mission of his coming, the Lord Jesus Christ liberated fallen man from all ontological and moral anomalies, reconciled mankind with God through his venerable cross, and charged the Church, founded by him, with the mission of reconciliation. Calling people to peace, the Church

declares the good news that the world is given to humanity in Christ, naturally and gracefully, and the task of each man and mankind as a whole is the incarnation of the gift of peace in historical reality. The Church declares peace in its pastoral sermons and liturgical life. In the kontakion for the feast of the Exaltation of the Precious and Life-giving Cross, we find the wonderful words that the cross of Christ is the "weapon of peace" and "unconquerable victory." The kontakion is based on an opposition of the meanings. The cross is called a weapon because it brings victory to each man and to the whole world. However, this victory has a spiritual and beneficial meaning: it grants pacification and the joy of existence; thus, the cross is called a weapon of peace. Those who have read the kontakion in its original Greek should have paid special attention to the word "tropeon," the sense of which becomes clear when understood in terms of the classical Greek military tradition. Ancient Greeks, after battle, used to erect on that place of the battlefield where the battles' turning point occurred and the enemy began to retreat, monuments made of the armor of the conquered enemy, called "tropeon." The Christian Church has adopted the metaphorical name "tropeon" for the cross of Christ, because from the moment of his victory over death, evil is conquered in this most dramatic manifestation, and, from this very moment, a moral turning point in the historical life of humanity takes place. The evil, horrors, and cruelties of the ancient world start to retreat and remain within the framework of history. In the framework of the world's historical process, the task of civilization is to overcome the tendency of militarization so as to achieve a boundary or turning point from which peace will start to settle victoriously in international world life. To achieve such a state, the now living human population in its striving for peace should form a new international moral consciousness and destroy all stockpiles of nuclear and other refined weapons on earth in order to prohibit war from stepping over the threshold of the Christian era's third millenium. The victory of Christ is metaphysical and, thus, the most safe in an ontological and moral sense for achievement of a historically real victory of reason and good over the forces of evil.

From the middle 1980s, scientists from around the world ceased to have doubts about the really global character of the problems facing humanity. Such global problems as peace, social and international justice, as well as ecological problems, are interrelated. Such a dynamic makes it possible to see the problem of peace as both a global and complex problem. The problem of peace acquires its complication and sharpness as a result of the contradiction between economy and culture. Economy is, in fact, the basis of culture. At present, cultural

progress is impossible to consider without an understanding of the achievements of economy and culture together, a process of civilization which has existed on earth for several thousand years. The question concerning what fate awaits human civilization in the future is a concern not only of scientists, but also of those who are distant from the study of modern global problems. The breach between economy and culture, both moral and spiritual culture, is rooted in the fact that mankind has created huge economic potential while progress in the sphere of moral culture remains immeasurably small. Economic potential allowed such weapon systems to be created which, from the point of view of moral consciousness, must seem to be madness. It was not in vain that Einstein suggested that, since the time of the nuclear bomb's creation, everything has changed except the consciousness of the people.

In order to realize the place of culture in the history of civilization and the role of civilization in the world's historical process, it seems necessary to turn to the sphere of Orthodox dogmatic theology which contains the teaching of God, creator, law-giver, and consecrator. Insight into dogmatics would allow us, first, to reveal the inner (esoteric) character of the search for peace, and, second, to comprehend the world process of civilization in its relation to the kingdom of God.

The main principles of Christian cosmology and anthropology, in connection with the teaching of God the creator are well known. It is only necessary to mention two examples here. The first is that creation, as the creative activity of God, is the main principle of the relation of God to the world. According to this principle a creature is connected with the creator gracefully (through energies); it exists thanks to the constant activity of divine providence. The second is that the reality of space, created by God, is a necessary condition for the formation and development of each man's personality. God created the world in order to transfer it to human possession. Man becomes God's co-worker, a conductor of divine actions in each creature. Creative transformation of the world, which constitutes the main contents of the process of civilization, takes place simultaneously with the process of creative transformation of human personalities in their approach to the kingdom of God. The final aim of man, which is to become like God, is achieved in a context of the world process of civilization. It is necessary to mention that the attitude of creatively transforming the world was already commanded to man before the fall: a commandment to till and preserve the garden of Eden (Gen 2.15). Thus, civilization is not measured by the necessity of survival after the fall, but an initial task put before man. The dialectical difficulty of civilization's process is that man must overcome his natural

beginning after the sin of Adam in relation to his own fallen nature. Man began to achieve the first by means of economy and the second by means of culture. In the Book of Genesis we find the first valuable indication of man's achievements regarding the economical transformation of nature. Here, we also come across the first indication of a tragic breach occurring between achievements in the spheres of economy and moral culture. More specifically, we turn to the situation of the farmer, Cain, who is experienced but rigid and non-transformed morally. Discrepancy between material and spiritual culture had to compensate for the law given by God. Under culture, in the broadest sense, we understand man's mastery over the process of his own behavior. Law is the factor which regulates the behavior of man. Orthodox dogmatic and moral teaching speaks about a natural and revealed moral law. Both material and revealed moral law orient man to overcome the negative inclinations of his fallen nature, which are manifest in aggressiveness and hedonism. Orthodox theology, in its very principle, cannot agree to naturalistic and reductionalistic concepts for explaining nature and human behavior. With respect to the aggressive and hedonistic features which characterize fallen man, Orthodox theologians tend not to view this factor as a primary and, thus, indisputable one, but rather as an introduced factor and, thus, surmountable in principle. There is something in fallen human nature, according to E. N. Trubeckoy, which belongs to the kingdom of death, something which will not achieve future transformation and glorification. There are such dark inclinations, instincts, and passions which are the source of selfishness, aggressiveness, and hostility. The primary factors which help man to overcome aggressiveness, selfishness, and hostility and step on the path of peace are, from the point of view of natural moral law, three human feelings: shame, sympathy, and reverence. According to V. S. Solovjev, these feelings are the main agents of man's moral activity. The precondition of this scheme is a triple character of human relations, the three spheres of man's being: natural existence, interpersonal relations, and religious life as included in the relations of personality towards the natural beginning, neighbor, and God. From these three bases of morals follow the three main principles: 1) shame, which reflects the relation of man to his natural beginning, follows the principle of Christian ascetism; 2) from sympathy, which expresses his attitude to neighbors, the principle of Christian love; 3) from reverence, which expressed his human attitude toward God, the principle of Christian respect for God. The initial of these three principles is the principle of Christian ascetism of abstention, which, in its most general sense, means the overcoming by man of his natural fallen beginning; striving for ascent above

the natural order of life; and mastery over the process of his own behavior. When man is ashamed to openly express his natural needs, suppresses his natural selfishness, and is guided by the principle of abstention or the etiquette observed in society, he shows that he is the bearer not only of natural, but also of spiritual life which is highest because of its value and contents. Through the manifestation of Christian love man's overcoming of selfishness and hostility is exercised at a new level of spiritual quality. Here an active and creative beginning prevails, which brings peace to the character of interpersonal relations while forming a spiritually wonderful personality. Finally, in the experience of spiritual Christian life, the boundaries of interpersonal relations are extended to such a degree that they include all neighbors and strangers. This is the experience of the Holy Fathers, witnessed by the Church, who saw human needs and brought peace and consolation to all.

Thus, the moral law given by God established the harmony of man with himself and the whole world, an experience which can be transferred upon different levels of human relations. A model of peace and harmony may reflect the status of early Christian communities. Saint Clement, bishop of Rome, characterizing the moral relations of the Christians of Corinth, wrote the following: "So everybody was given deep and wonderful peace and insatiable aspiration for doing good" (1 Cor 2). In the framework of a state, the aspiration of some people for peace tends to develop into stable public opinion and thus becomes the basis of a peace loving foreign policy. A summarized expression of a people's high moral consciousness may be characterized by the peaceful activity of a state in the sphere of international political life. Like the sphere of personal relations, the sphere of international relations is characterized by an aspiration for confidence, sincerity, and peace which is an actual manifestation of the law given to the people by God who "hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation" (Acts 17.26).

In the teaching of the church of God, the subject of the consecrator is raised in courses on dogmatic theology in connection with questions regarding the consecration of man. The antithesis of nature and law is replaced by the antithesis of law and grace. The means of consecration and the gifts of divine grace contain the ontological source of peace. Its absolute metaphysical basis is that Christ, whom the Father consecrated and sent to the world, in the mission of his coming, consecrated not only human nature, but also every useful creative activity and all of space and history surrounding man; i.e.,

he introduced man to the ideal norm of being, one of the most essential characteristics of which is peace.

In the incarnation of the Logos, all of humanity is potentially consecrated, but the mission of the consecration of each separate human personality and human society as a whole is actually exercised through the Church. The Church calls man to the holiness of life and suggests sources of consecration to him. In the life of the Church man finds the graceful gift of peace and experimentally comes to know its primary value. Thus, peace and holiness coincide in the call of the Church and are recommended to an "old" man who has not yet conquered in himself the inclinations of his fallen nature. Turning to the sources of consecration—the Word of God, the holy sacraments, and pastoral guidance, man conquers the evil within his own nature and ascends the steps of holiness. Victory over dark inclinations and aggressiveness is neither their suppression through control over consciousness, nor, vice versa, their sublimation in the process of creative work, but rather their eradication from the nature of the "old" man who thus becomes a new creature in Christ. The result of man's consecration by divine grace is his participation in the world of Christ which "surpasses the mind." This world is the highest and unmatched gift. From his own moral experience or descriptions of fiction man can guess that the true value of this gift cannot be compensated by outer gifts. As an ideal fulfillment of being, the world of Christ is characterized in the way Saint Paul defines the Kingdom of God, as "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom 14.17). Here "peace" and "kingdom of God" are correlative categories. They mean that the aspiration of each man and the whole of humanity for joining the absolute and eternal gift, considers peace, as commanded by the Gospel, as its necessary condition at all levels of human relations.

Studying the dogmatic teaching of the church of God regarding the creator, lawgiver, and consecrator in connection with the existence of man in his three ontological conditions — natural, cultural-historical, and graceful, we are able to conclude that the search for peace in the most universal content and meaning of this notion includes several things: firstly, man's overcoming those anomalies of his nature damaged by sin; secondly, bridging the dramatic breach between economy and culture in the process of civilization and human legal relations; and thirdly, the striving of mankind to achieve spiritually a changed condition through consecration by divine grace and entry into the kingdom of God.

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which consequently understands Christianity in the categories of pagan Hellenism and its neo-Platonic philosophical articulation" (p. 26).

The five chapters of Section One carefully examine (1) the "Jewish Rite in the Christian Church: Ecumenical Possibility"; (2) "Judaism and Greek Orthodoxy in Historical Perspective"; (3) "Orthodox Christian and Jewish Relations"; (4) Jerusalem in the Orthodox Theological Tradition"; and (5) "An Encyclical of the Ecumenical Patriarch Metrophanes III (1520-1580) Condemning Oppression of Jews." All are consistent in emphasizing the positive and rejecting the negative and stress that an attitude of mutual respect and trust must be cultivated and supported by informed knowledge by which people can come to understand each other and engage in an honest and meaningful dialogue with each other. In the nineteenth century Metropolitan Athanasios of Corfu had strongly asserted that "The threats and inhuman acts against the Jews are absolutely incompatible with the faith of Christ, Who commands us to love all human beings" (p. 2).

Essays on Orthodox Christian-Jewish Relations is unique in that it is the first time that a priest of the Greek Orthodox Church, who has himself engaged in interfaith dialogue for the Orthodox Church, speaks out in some detail on topics of convergence and differences between the two traditions in an effort to explore, sensitively and reasonably, ways in which a productive dialogue can be and must be developed. It is, indeed, a pioneering work that could set the stage for a deeper and more far-reaching interfaith dialogue.

John E. Rexine
Colgate University

Drops from the Living Water: Orthodox Homilies on the Sunday Gospel Readings. By Augoustinos N. Kantiotes, Bishop of Florina. Translation and Foreword by Asterios Gerostergios. Belmont, MA: Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, 1992. Pp. 216. 52 illustrations. \$17.50, hard.

Sparks from the Apostles: Orthodox Homilies on the Sunday Apostolic Readings. By Augoustinos N. Kantiotes, Bishop of Florina. Translation and Foreword by Asterios Gerostergios. Belmont, MA: Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, 1992. Pp. 220. 30 illustrations. \$17.50, hard. Both volumes \$30.00.

The Rev. Dr. Asterios Gerostergios has again rendered all Orthodox Christians a service by translating and publishing two more works by the Bishop of Florina into English. A previous volume entitled *Follow Me* appeared in 1989 and was received in this journal in Volume 35, Number 1, Spring 1990, pp. 82-83. *Drops from the Living Water* was originally published in Greek by the Orthodox Missionary Brotherhood *Ho Stavros* ("The Cross") in Athens in 1973 and *Sparks from the Apostles* was also originally published by the same publishers in the same year. Bishop Augoustinos dedicated both books to his listeners and readers and Father Gerostergios has dedicated his translation of both works to all the clergy, Sunday School teachers and all the faithful of the English-speaking Orthodox Church in the Diaspora for their edification. Both books originated in sermons delivered by His Grace to his diocese and both follow the same pattern, beginning with the first Sunday of the calendar year and ending with the Sunday after Christmas (in the case of the Gospel Readings) and the Sunday before the Epiphany (in the case of the Readings from the Apostles). Though there are a few unidiomatic expressions in the translated texts, for the most part, Father Gerostergios has given us excellent translations into crystal clear English in both volumes.

Both *Drops from the Living Water* and *Sparks from the Apostles* will provide inspirational commentary on the Gospel and Apostolic readings for each Sunday of the year and could well be read individually before or after each Sunday Liturgy. The messages they deliver are clear and to the point. They are not theological treatises but sermons that try to appeal to contemporary issues that are at the center of modern life in Christocentric terms. They are modest but pointed efforts to relate the Gospels and Apostolic Readings to the lives of contemporary men and women. Bishop Augoustinos sees man and woman as "exceptional creations of God, with the abilities and gifts to fulfill the high mission given to them by God" (*Drops from the Living Water*, p. 59) and he emphasizes that the greatest teaching of Christ was love:

Christ taught love. He taught that we should love God, the Heavenly Father. He taught that we should love our parents. He taught that we should love other people like brothers. He taught that we should love even those who are our enemies and pray for them (*Sparks from the Apostles*, p. 59).

Bishop Augoustinos seeks to promote a positive, active, and fulfilling

practice of Christianity in the life of the individual and the community through his preaching of the Word.

Drops from the Living Water and *Sparks from the Apostles* can serve to fill a need both for meditation but also as a guide for applied Christianity.

John E. Rexine
Colgate University

Voices in the Wilderness: An Anthology of Patristic Prayers. By Nikolaos S. Hatzinikolaou. Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1988, Pp. 288.

One of the essential activities of the Christian life is prayer. For Orthodox Christians, prayer is often viewed within the context of the liturgical or communal life of the Church. However, with the publication of such works as *The Way of a Pilgrim* and the *Philokalia*, as well as numerous prayer books containing the daily cycle of Orthodox prayers, the Orthodox Church's rich tradition of private and interior prayer has been made available to the pious believer. To this growing wealth of resources one must now add Fr. Nikolaos Hatzinikolaou's book *Voices in the Wilderness: An Anthology of Patristic Prayers* (288 pages. Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1988).

Voices in the Wilderness is a collection of seventy-four prayers, of varying length, taken from twenty-five Orthodox saints. The lives of these authors cover a period of some seventy-hundred years of the Orthodox Christian tradition. With care and thoughtfulness Fr. Nikolaos has selected and translated prayers from such well-known Saints as Saint John Chrysostom and Saint Basil the Great as well as prayers from two recent Orthodox Saints: Saint Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain and Saint Nektarios. The prayers are replete with biblical quotations which are referenced in the right margin and are accompanied by a complete index of biblical passages appearing in the back of the book.

Each group of prayers attributed to a given Saint is prefaced by a short biographical note about the Saint. On the preceding page is a photographic reproduction of the icon of the Saint below which appears a translation of the Saint's Dismissal Hymn (Apolytikion). The book appears in both hardcover and paperback. The cover of the paperback edition was designed by a friend and classmate of Fr.

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constitutes the goal of the Christian life. Symeon brought together all the strands which he found in previous Byzantine liturgical expositions. Symeon capably combined them "into a complex, if not always consistent, pattern of liturgical exposition, which became after Symeon's synthesis part of the unquestioned heritage of the Orthodox Christian tradition" (p. 171).

Hugh Wybrew raises the question of what to Westerners might seem to be a lack of participation in the Liturgy by the laity—the observation that Orthodox worshipers are the passive spectators of a clericalized rite, but cautions that "There is a participation in worship which is contemplative rather than active . . . There is a contemplative quality about the Liturgy and other Orthodox services from which Western Christians may have something to learn" (p. 179). "Perhaps something of the contemplative quality of Orthodox worship could impart to Western worship a dimension it has either never had, or is in danger of losing" (p. 180). Clearly the Orthodox Church preserves the primacy of worship in its Christian life, and that is, as Hugh Wybrew points out, surely a necessary witness.

The Orthodox Liturgy is a splendid book that will certainly illuminate Orthodox and non-Orthodox alike about a subject that has been and is absolutely central to an Orthodox Christian's life.

John Rexine

Spirit of Truth: The Origins of Johannine Pneumatology. Vol. I. By John Breck. Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1991. Pp. xvi + 188. \$10.95, soft.

Spirit of Truth: The Origins of Johannine Pneumatology is the first volume in a two volume project on "The Holy Spirit in Johannine Tradition," the second volume of which will be called *The Spirit-Paraclete in Johannine Tradition* by the V. Rev. John Breck, editor of *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, author of *The Power of the Word* (1986), and Associated Professor of New Testament and Ethics at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary. The present study is a complete reworking of the author's doctoral thesis submitted to the Ruprecht-Karl Universität, Heidelberg, Germany in 1972 and in its present form is addressed "especially to students, pastors, and interested lay persons who wish to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the role played by the Spirit of God throughout the Old Testament and intertestamental periods" (p. viii). At the same time, Father Breck believes that his work will be useful to scholars

because the origin and development of the "spirit-dualism" which lies behind the opposition between the "Spirit of Truth" and the "Spirit of Deceit" in 1 John 4.6 has received little attention from biblical specialists. *The Spirit of Truth* traces the growth of that theme in Hebrew Scriptures and takes account of the role that extra-biblical sources played in molding the image of Spirit during Israel's thousand years of recorded history. Father Breck's second volume will deal with the Spirit of Truth in the Gospel and John's First Epistle.

The current book is divided into two Parts. Part 1, entitled "The Spirit in the Old Testament and Ancient Near East," contains three chapters on (1) "The Spirit in Israel's Salvation History"; (2) "The Spirit and the Word in Hebrew Prophecy"; and (3) "The Spirit-Concept in the Ancient Near East," while Part 2, called "The Spirit in the Hellenistic Age," also contains three chapters on (4) "Jewish Wisdom Tradition"; (5) "Hellenistic Sources" and (6) "The Dead Sea Scrolls." In addition to an Introduction and Conclusion, the book has an extensive bibliography, detailed notes (at the end of each chapter), and indexes of Select Terms and of Biblical References.

In general, in the Pentateuch, the term *ruach* describes three distinct modes of spiritual being or activity: (1) a life force that animates and sustains human existence; (2) the divine Spirit or Spirit of the Lord, which in the historical books plays an important role in Israel's salvation-history; and (3) spirits which imbue chosen individuals with specific moral or charismatic qualities. *Ruach* is the instrument by which God's purpose in history is fulfilled; it is the vehicle of God's self-revelation. In the Prophets, it is the source of all authentic inspiration: "That which enables them to hear and to interpret the prophecy according to the divine will" (p. 25). *Ruach* also has a teaching function, proclaiming the Word and enabling people to hear the Word: "The Word itself has now become the active agent, mediated by the Spirit and proclaimed by the prophet" (p. 31). In the post-exilic age, the Word serves as the mediating presence between the transcendent God and human history. It is in this period that there is developed the idea that God's presence abides in the Spirit; that the Spirit is known and experienced as an abiding gift of the Lord. Breck emphasizes that the prophetic movement attests to the specific revelatory function of both Spirit and Word. Conceptually, the Spirit came to be known as the bearer of the word.

Much of Breck's first volume is concerned to demonstrate that the Old Testament was influenced by other forces, especially, Egyptian and Iranian, even though he realizes that many Orthodox Christians and other will find such discussion religiously inappropriate, but Breck believes such analysis will only confirm the operation of

God within the history and cultures of other early non-Jewish and non-Christian peoples.

Egyptian religion, for example, put forth *ka*, which though originally a psychological concept, assumed a theological dimension as that divine power which creates and sustains all things (a word which can be translated as "spirit," "word," and probably "seed") before similar notions in Babylonian and Israelite religions. Sumero-Akkadian mythology acknowledged the distinctiveness of the word by attributing to it creative power (*sharu*). Akkadian (Assyro-Babylonian) and Iranian religions describe spirit as the divine breath, the source of human life; the divine power within history; and as the divine bearer of truth and Life. Breck sees some degree of absorption by Judaeen exiles, who were constantly exposed to Chaldean and Babylonian mythology and cult practices, just as they had also been exposed to Canaanite myths, legends, and fertility cults in Palestine. This exposure was reflected in the changing perception of *ruach* from a semi-autonomous life force and charismatic power to the chief instrument of God's self-revelation.

Breck gives much attention to the Iranian *Spenta Mainyu*—"The Bounteous Spirit" or "Spirit of Truth," to the teachings of Zarathustra, and to the monotheism centered upon the "one true God," *Ahura Mazda* or "The Wise Lord." He finds in the three figures, *Spenta Mainyu*, *Vohu Manah*, and *Sraosha*, remarkable resemblances to the Holy Spirit of post-exilic Judaism and to the Spirit of the New Testament. *Spenta Mainyu* freely chose Truth; his twin *Angra Mainyu* the Lie, which set in motion the disruptive powers of Evil which struggle against the forces of Truth for an eternal claim upon human souls. *Ahura* as the embodiment of Truth is revealed as a faithful covenant-lord. His saving Word is represented by *Sraosha*, mediated by *Spenta Mainyu*, "incarnated" with the *Vohu Manah*. Truth is seen as cosmic order and union with God; the Lie (*Druj*) originates with *Angra Mainyu* (the Evil Spirit), and is associated with the forces of wrath, violence and disorder. Breck sees the Hebrew conception of Spirit as mediator of the Word, signifying divine revelation, as owing much to the religious genius of Zarathustra. Breck argues that Judaism was directly influenced by Iranian thought and that it assimilated many of its most profound spiritual insights concerning God and His relations with the created world. But the imperative or repentance was not so characteristic of the Iranian tradition as it was of Hebrew anthropology which embraced the profound Hebraic insight regarding sin and guilt.

The Jewish Wisdom tradition saw God as the source of all genuine knowledge and understanding. God orders the cosmos and in-

scribes in it a Torah or Law of life that guides the wise man in his pursuit of happiness and prosperity. Although Egyptian and Hellenistic influences considerably shaped the Jewish Wisdom figure, one major characteristic of the Good Mind, namely, the eschatological functions, especially the role of judgment, is missing. The Hebrew eschatological factor was important for the re-emergence of Spirit in later apocalyptic and early Christian writings. Under Hellenistic Greek influence Wisdom becomes an intellectual or rational category with its ethical aspect preserved. Many of the themes of Proverbs can be found developed in the Book of Job: Wisdom is shown to be a divine gift revealed to the just man and serving as the principle of right order within the cosmos. The human spirit is identified with the Spirit of Yahweh: "the human spirit is the breath of God, the creative life-force which dwells within every human being" (p. 85).

Father Breck aptly summarizes the development of Wisdom as follows:

The soteriological, revelatory function attributed to the Spirit in earlier tradition is transferred in the book of Job to personified Wisdom. In older Hebrew sapiential writings, Wisdom is analogous to the prophetic Word; they are both semi-technical expressions for the will of God revealed through a human mediator, whether prophet or sage. In the later post-exilic period, the role of Spirit is as the inspirational power behind prophecy diminished, in keeping with the warnings of the prophets themselves. Subsequently, Spirit was projected into Israel's future as an eschatological figure. As a result, it appears almost exclusively in apocalyptic writings of the inter-testamental period. With the disappearance of Spirit, and of prophetic activity in general, there emerged in Judaism the figure of personified Wisdom, rooted in ancient Hebrew tradition . . . (pp. 85-86).

Breck notes that Wisdom is never portrayed as the agent of moral regeneration as is the Spirit, even though she sanctifies the moral man.

In his survey of Greek and Hellenistic Jewish sources (Philo, *The Mystery Religions, the Hermetic Corpus*), Breck notes marked differences between the Greek *pneuma* and the Hebrew *ruach*. Where *pneuma* was originally an immanent, natural, physical or psychological force, *ruach* signified divinity itself, the presence in history of the transcendent holy God. In the authors of the *Hermetica*, the nature of *pneuma* is ambiguously described and never functions as a vehicle of revelation nor as the inspirational power behind prophecy. It remains an

essentially created element, a natural phenomenon.

Father Breck sees a close relationship between the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs and the Scrolls of the Dead Sea community, especially in terms of the contrast between the Holy Spirit/Evil Spirit and Truth/Deception. In the Qumran Scrolls Beliar is identified with the Angel of Darkness who opposes the Angel of Light. The didactic and forensic roles in the Johannine tradition were shaped by the spirit-dualism of the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs and the Dead Sea Scrolls, which merged a metaphysical dualism with moral and eschatological themes to produce an analysis of human sin that is much more subtle and realistic than anything Zarathustra developed. In the Scrolls the sins of man are expiated through the *Spirit of true counsel*; the sinner is cleansed from all sins by the *Spirit of holiness* that unites him to the truth; and his iniquity is expiated by the *Spirit of uprightness*. Elsewhere, the two spirits of Truth and Perversity are referred to, both created by God. There is a conflict between Truth and Falsehood; there is love of truth and hatred of sin. The Iranian spirit-dualism is incompatible with the Old Testament themes of individual freedom and responsibility, of voluntary acceptance or rejection of sin, and of divine grace granted in response to righteous behavior, in two traditions that respectively reflect the metaphysical as against the ethical. This led to the *yezer*-dualism of Rabbinic thought.

Throughout the Scrolls, the principal operations of the Spirit are purification, revelation, and sanctification. The emphasis falls upon "knowing the Truth" and "doing the Truth." In the Johannine tradition, the content of that truth is the very person of Jesus Christ, the revealing Word and Son of God. Breck stresses that "Under foreign and especially Persian influence, the moral opposition between truth and error, faithfulness and unfaithfulness, gradually developed into a moral dualism rooted in the pre-exilic prophecies of Isaiah and Hosea, and particularly in the primitive belief in good and evil spirits that influence human behavior" (p. 141). In Jewish Wisdom, truth became synonymous with revelation, in some cases, and signified the expression of the divine will and purpose. In the Dead Sea Scrolls it is predicated of God and His activity within the world: His works are truth. Truth is the revelation and manifestation of divine reality itself. The Apostolic writers, like the Teacher of Righteousness of the Dead Sea Scrolls, found in "truth the mystery of God's saving love, concealed until the present eschatological age and revealed to the elect by the Spirit of Truth" (p. 145). Truth in the Scrolls has a soteriological purpose. In their view, God grants by the Spirit to the community of the faithful both knowledge and purification making

possible for those who love him and observe his commandments to dwell eternally in his presence. Those who followed the prescriptions of the Torah, the essence of the Covenant relationship, were believed to have faithfully preserved the truth. God revealed his truth to them in and through the Hebrew Scriptures.

Spirit of Truth is an absolutely fascinating, heavily documented, book that accomplishes what it sets out to do, namely, to reveal the influence of the Old Testament, Zoroastrianism and the Qumran texts on the shaping of the figure of the Spirit in Israel's religious experience. The spirit of truth—spirit of deception dualism, as in 1 John 4:16, is shown to be rooted in the Dead Sea Scrolls and ultimately in the ethical—eschatological dualism of the Iranian prophet Zarathustra. It clearly indicates how Israel came to know the Spirit as a blessing, sanctifying, protecting, and revealing Divine Presence.

Spirit of Truth surely deserves to be read by every Orthodox scholar of both the Old and the New Testaments and even by the general reader with an interest in the world of the ancient Near East, but especially by those with an interest in the Judaic and Christian traditions.

John E. Rexine

The Challenge of Our Past. By John H. Erickson. Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1991. Pp. 174 with Index.

At a time when available material on the canonical tradition of the Orthodox Church in the English language is still relatively scarce compared to that of other theological disciplines, it is heartening to discover the present publication. And although some might be tempted to attribute this relative scarcity to a "defunct" theological discipline, the author of this fine collection of essays reminds us that they constitute a "living" tradition. Tradition, after all, "reveals the spirit at work in both past and present" (p. 7).

The author of these essays is a respected canonist, who teaches the "living" canonical tradition of the Orthodox Church at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary. He is, therefore, eminently qualified, as his essays show, to articulate the ways in which this tradition is alive and applicable in the lives of all those to whom it pertains.

Ten important issues relevant to the Orthodox Church today and

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Symbol, Sacrament, and Hierarchy in Saint Dionysios the Areopagite

Eric Justin David Perl

A LONG-STANDING CONTROVERSY CONCERNING THE WORK OF SAINT Dionysios the Areopagite has recently been taken up in the pages of *Saint Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*.¹ For many years, some Orthodox theologians have enthusiastically adopted and used the thought of Dionysios, while others have denounced it as contrary to the Faith. The difference is not merely an "academic" disagreement in historical theology, for the teachings for which Dionysios is condemned or approved belong to the very heart of the Orthodox vision of the world. Yet there has been little explicit debate on the question among Orthodox theologians, and in America, at least, the rejection of this Father seems to be becoming the prevailing "orthodoxy." The present article will take up and amplify Father Golitzin's defense of Dionysios, as part of an effort to restore him to his proper place among the Fathers of the Church.

The mere fact of the assault upon Dionysios reveals a distressing attitude toward holy tradition. As Orthodox, we do not have the license to scrutinize the works of the Fathers and reject those which

¹ Kenneth Paul Wesche, "Christological Doctrine and Liturgical Interpretation in Pseudo-Dionysios," *Saint Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 33 (1989), 53-73; Hieromonk Alexander (Golitzin), "'On the Other Hand': A Response to Father Paul Wesche's Recent Article on Dionysios . . .," *Saint Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 34 (1990) 305-23; Wesche, "Appendix: A Reply to Hieromonk Alexander's Reply," *Ibid.* pp. 324-27. Like Father Folitzin ("On the Other Hand," pp. 306-07, n. 7), I refrain from using the prefix "pseudo-," not out of adherence to the sub-apostolic origin of the Dionysian corpus, but on account of the term's prejudicial connotations.

do not fit our notion of what the Faith is. To be sure, no Father is absolutely free from error. But it is one thing to point out isolated errors in particular points of doctrine, and quite another to assert that any Father's "chief inspiration," his fundamental intuition and view of reality, is contrary to the Faith.² Dionysios is considered subject to such treatment merely because of his pseudonymity. But regardless of who wrote them,³ the Dionysian works have been received and exalted by the entire Church for almost fifteen centuries, and therefore belong to the tradition. It is content, not authorship, that tradition affirms, and to suggest that the content of the Dionysian corpus is fundamentally alien to the Orthodox faith is to suggest that the Holy Spirit has been sleeping through these ages.⁴ Our task, therefore, is to approach these works not as neutral critics seeking to evaluate them, but as Orthodox faithful seeking to understand them, and through them to understand Tradition itself.

Father Golitzin's reply is well-aimed and touches on most of the issues which form the center of our own examination. The purpose of the present study is not to repeat what he has said, but to confirm his remarks by placing them in the context of Dionysios' ontology as a whole and supporting this interpretation with more extensive textual citations. This is plainly needed in view of Father Wesche's "Reply" to Father Golitzin, in which he suggests that "Father Alexander is imposing on Dionysios an interpretation that is not wholly consistent with what is actually there"⁵ and says that the heart of

² Despite Father Wesche's protestation that he does "not wish to consign Dionysios to the dung-heap" ("Appendix," p. 325), this is in effect what he does when he says that "Dionysios' vision . . . renders superfluous the Incarnation of Christ" ("Christological Doctrine," pp. 63-64). Surely any writer of whom such an extreme statement can be made is fit only for the dung-heap as far as the Orthodox Church is concerned.

³ There is in fact no solid evidence for the common assertion, repeated by Father Wesche ("Christological Doctrine," p. 54), that their author was a monophysite.

⁴ Cf. Golitzin, "On the Other Hand," p. 310, and esp. Vladimir Lossky, "Tradition and Traditions," in *In the Image and Likeness of God*, ed. John H. Erickson and Thomas E. Bird (Crestwood, 1974), p. 158: "Without belonging to the 'apostolic tradition' properly so-called, the Dionysian corpus belongs to the 'patristic tradition,' which continues that of the apostles and of their disciples." Lossky continues, n. 31: "It would be as false to deny the traditional character of the work of 'Dionysios,' by basing oneself on the fact of non-apostolic origin, as to wish to attribute it to the convert of Saint Paul, on the pretext that these writings were received by the Church under the title of Saint Dionysios the Areopagite. Both these attitudes would equally reveal a lack of true consciousness of the tradition."

⁵ "Appendix," p. 324. The same can hardly be said of the present writer, who

his case remains unanswered:

What draws my attention chiefly in the Dionysian corpus . . . is first the immovable character of the hierarchies, and second a gnostic kind of dualism . . . between ontology and soteriology . . . [I]n the thought of Dionysios, salvation is not conceived as a "new creation" in which we are ransomed body and soul from the nothingness of death into which we have fallen through sin. . . . What fallenness there is in Dionysios' view seem to be primarily a fall into materiality, which is remedied . . . by focusing the mind on material tokens for its ascent beyond and out of "body" to an ineffable, immaterial mystical union with the supra-comprehensible God; in other words, a gnosis conceived strictly in terms of a noetic union. . . .⁶

We will focus, therefore, on these issues: the distinction which Father Wesche seen in Dionysios between "being" and "knowing," which would render his doctrine of fall and salvation "gnostic" rather than ontological; the role of the Incarnation and the sacraments in salvation; the place of the body and the senses in deification; and the supposed "immovable" character of the hierarchies, which would prevent him from understanding salvation as the direct ontological communion of the whole man, body and soul, with God.

The Ontology of Symbolism

Dionysios regards creation as theophany, the manifestation of God.⁷ God's self-revelation is not merely an event whereby already existing creatures are enabled to know him. Rather it is the ontological event whereby creatures come to be and are united with him. "The

came to these works as a non-believer and *learned* the Orthodox sacramental vision of reality *from* Dionysios (among others). This would hardly have been possible if it were not there. I have frequently cited the work of Balthasar and Semmelroth to provide further testimony that this reading is true to Dionysios, since it is hard to see how so many interpreters could find in him the same teachings if they are not there to be found.

⁶"Appendix," p. 326.

⁷See the excellent account by Otto Semmelroth, "Gottes ausstrahlendes Licht: Zur Schöpfungs- und Offenbarungslehre des Ps.-Dionysios Areopagita," *Scholastik* 28 (1953), esp. pp. 481, 496-99.

cause of all things, by a beautiful and good love of all, through an excess of loving goodness, comes to be outside himself by the providences into all beings. . . . and from being above all and transcending all is brought down to being in all . . .'⁸ This erotic ecstasy of God is his creative gift of himself to the world.⁹ But on account of this ecstasy he is named "love and charity . . . because he is the *revelation* of himself (ἐκφανσις . . . ἑαυτοῦ) through himself, and the good procession of transcendent union, and loving motion . . . proceeding in the Good, and from the Good overflowing into beings. . . ."¹⁰ In this creative ecstasy God, who in himself, apart from creation, in Nothing, the Non-being beyond being, nameless and unknowable, reveals himself as the Being of all things and so becomes knowable from all things and subject to all names. "To him who is the cause of all things and above all things, both namelessness and all the names of beings are fitting. . . . As the Scripture says, he is 'all things in all things,' and is truly hymned as the ground of all things . . . and from all beings he is properly hymned and named."¹¹ His self-revelation is his creative presence to the world, causing it to be by making himself present to it, allowing it to know and to participate in himself who is imparticipable.¹² "For all the divine things, as many as are revealed to us, are known by the participations alone."¹³ But revealing himself by being the cause of all, God also

⁸ DN 4.13, 712AB. Like Father Golitzin, I have chosen to provide my own translations rather than to use the paraphrase by Colm Luibheid, *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works* (New York and Mahwah, 1987), which is often so far from the original as not to deserve the name translation. The works of Dionysius are abbreviated as follows: DN = *On the Divine Names*; CH = *On the Celestial Hierarchy*; EH = *On the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*; Ep. = *Epistle*. All references are to Migne, PG.3.

⁹ Cf. Hans Urs von Balthasar, "Denys," in *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*, vol. 2: Studies in Theological Style: Clerical Styles, tr. A. Louth et al. (San Francisco and New York, 1984), p. 186: "The act by which God allows creation to share in his being, through which the world comes into being . . . is God himself. . . ."

¹⁰ DN 4.14, 712C.

¹¹ DN 1.7, 596C-97A.

¹² See esp. DN 2.5, 644AB: "From the participations and the participants are hymned the things which are imparticipably participated." God is participated by creatures as a seal by its impressions, but "the imparticipability of the Godhead, cause of all, goes beyond these." Cf. Balthasar, "Denys," p. 188: "That in which [creatures] participate is itself precisely that in which they cannot participate, for were it not that, they would not be participating in God."

¹³ DN 2.7, 645A.

remains unknowable as beyond all. Because creation is God's self-revelation, the unknowable God is known only in the structure of the created world: "It is necessary to ask, how we know God, who is neither intelligible, nor sensible, nor is anything among beings. Perhaps then it is true to say that we know God, not from his nature (for this is unknowable, and exceeds all reason and mind), but from the order of all beings, as projected from him. . . ." ¹⁴

This principle of creation as theophany is bound up with the very notion of what it means to create. To create something is to cause it to be. But that which causes a thing to be is its form or determination, that in virtue of which it is *what* it is. For a thing to be is for it to have its proper nature or self-identity. For instance, for a dog to be is for it to be a dog; if it were not a dog, or if it should cease to be a dog, it would not be itself and so would not be at all. This seemingly trivial notion is in fact of the most profound significance. It means that the "selfness" of the creature is its very being, that its identity is the heart of its existence. But if this constitutive "whatness" of things is what causes them to be, then it is God, their Creator. God creates, then, by imparting himself to creatures as their inmost identity or essence, in virtue of which they exist. This is the meaning of Dionysios' repeated insistence that God is the life of living things, the wisdom of wise things, and so on. He means this in the most literal possible sense: a living thing is alive, and thus is what it is and so exists, because of the presence in it of Life. It is by being their Life, then, that God causes living things to be, or creates them. "The fulfilling cause of all things is the Godhead of Jesus . . . as . . . form making form in the formless, as source of form . . . determining the whole principles and orders. . . . And he is the measure of all things. . . ." ¹⁵ Form, determination, measure: this is God the Creator. This is true not only at the level of universals such as life or beauty, but even at the level of particulars. The

¹⁴DN 7.3, 869CD; cf. *Ep.* 9, 1108B. Cf. Balthasar, "Denys," p. 154: "If Greek thought from Plato to Plotinus has an essentially aesthetic, religious structure—for the cosmos is experienced as the representation and manifestation of the hidden transcendent beauty of God—then it is no sacrilege, but rather a fulfilment, if Christian theology . . . first in Alexandria and Cappadocia . . . and with the Greeks from the time of the Nazianzene, and in the great forms of the Greek liturgies—if in all these manifestations, Christian theology takes over this aesthetic and metaphysical schema. But in all this, nothing approaches in power and will to achieve expression the theological composition of the Areopagite."

¹⁵ DN 2.10, 648C.

determining identity of each thing, in virtue of which it is itself and so is, is God-for-it: "But we say that the being-making (οὐσιοποιλὺς) logoi of all beings, which pre-exist uniformly in God, are paradigms, which theology calls predeterminations, and divine and good wills, *determinative and creative* (ἀφοριστικὰ καὶ ποιητικὰ) of beings, according to which the Superessential both pre-determined and produced all beings."¹⁶

This is why Dionysios regards creatures as "symbols" of intelligible reality. The "intelligibles" in question, as Father Golitzin points out, are neither angels nor separately subsisting ideas, nor any created beings at all, but the uncreated divine activities, that is, God himself as imparted and revealed, which inform and so cause all creatures.¹⁷ They are intelligible (νοητός) in that they are the determinative identities, structures, forms of creatures which can be apprehended by the mind (νοῦς). Hence it is as the causal determination, the form of all things, that God is intelligible, that is, revealed, knowable. He can be seen and known in each thing as its particular logos, in living things as life, in wise things as wisdom, and most generally in all beings as being, the most universal determination of all. Just as living things are living in virtue of the presence in them of Life, so all beings *are* by the presence in them of being. Thus being is God, the cause of beings. God creates, or causes beings, by imparting himself to them as their being: "God . . . neither was, nor will be, nor came to be nor comes to be, nor will come to be; indeed, he is not; but he is being to beings. . . ."¹⁸ In creating, the nameless Nothing reveals himself, makes himself intelligible, as the being of beings. This is the basis for Dionysios' simultaneous affirmation of God's transcendence and immanence: "The being of all things is the Divinity beyond being (τὸ γὰρ εἶναι πάντων ἐστὶν ἢ ὑπὲρ τὸ εἶναι θεότης)."¹⁹

Creation as the self-revelation is also the self-impartation of God.

¹⁶DN 5.8, 824C.

¹⁷Cf. Golitzin, "On the Other Hand," p. 320. Luiheid's term "conceptual" is an exceptionally misleading translation of νοητός, for it implies that these "intelligibles" are mental abstractions subsisting only in a thinking subject. The term in Greek philosophy refers to an objective, extra-mental reality of a kind which is accessible or knowable to the intellect (νοῦς) by its activity of intellection (νόησις), rather than to the senses by sense-perception.

¹⁸DN 5.4, 817D.

¹⁹CH 4.1, 177D.

In creating God gives *himself* to creatures as their Being, so that they may be.

[The thearchy] is given to all beings, and, overflowing with the participations of all goods, is distinguished unitedly, and is multiplied uniquely, and becomes multiform without going out of the One; as, since God . . . gives being to beings and produces the whole substances, that One is said to become multiform by the production of many beings from him, while That remains no less, and one in the multiplication . . . by the undiminished flow of his unlesened impartations.²⁰

Thus creatures come to be by receiving or participating in the incommunicable, imparticipable God. Hence the divine impartations, participations, or intelligible powers such as being, life, and wisdom do not constitute an intermediate level of being, neither God nor the created world. Rather they undergo in Dionysios a twofold reduction, to the imparticipable, unknowable God on one side and to the very forms or determinations of creatures on the other. "If we name the superessential hiddenness God, or life, or being, or light, or word, we understand nothing other than the powers brought forth from It to us, deific, of being-making, or life-generating, or wisdom-giving."²¹ Thus Dionysios carefully explains that God is both being itself (the being of beings), life itself, and so on, and is also beyond these "names:" "We do not say that being itself . . . is a certain divine or angelic substance . . . nor that there are substances and hypostases which are originative and creative of beings . . . but we say that being itself, and life itself, and divinity itself are, originatively (*ἀρχικῶς*), divinely, and causally, the one super-source of all and the superessential source and cause; but as participated (*μεθεκτικῶς*) they are the providential powers given out from the imparticipable God, substantification itself, vivification itself, deification itself, in which all beings participate. . . ."²² It is one and the same God who is *both* the incommunicable, superessential nothing, *and*, in his creative

²⁰DN 2.11, 649BC.

²¹DN 2.7, 645A; cf. also DN 5.2, 816Df. As Father Golitzin remarks ("On the Other Hand," p. 320), on this point Dionysius expressly departs from Proclus' theory of separate "mean terms" between the imparticipable cause and the participating effect.

²²DN 7.6, 953C-56A.

relation to the world, the formal being of all things.²³

This identification of the intelligible, participated forms of creatures with the imparticipable, incomprehensible God is the basis for Dionysios' understanding of the relation between God and the world as the antinomic union of identity and difference. In himself neither a being nor even being itself, in creating God becomes "all things in all things." God is

above every name, the nameless, who "excels every name that is named, whether in this age or in the age to come;" but many-named . . . life, light, god, truth, when the godly-wise hymn the cause of all with many names from all the things caused, as good, beautiful . . . as being . . . as wisdom, as mind, as word. . . . And they say that he is in minds, and in souls, and in bodies, and in heaven and on earth, and at once the same in the same, in the world, about the world, above the world, above the heaven, above being, sun, star, fire, water, wind, dew, cloud, stone itself, and rock, *all beings and none of beings*.²⁴

Since God creates by imparting himself, he truly is "all things," but only as imparted *ad extra*. Creation understood as theophany is God's making himself other in order that the other, the world, may be. Hence Dionysius sums up his entire doctrine of both epistemology and ontology thus:

God is known in all things and apart from all things; and he is known by knowledge, and by unknowing, and of him there is intellection, and reason, and science, and touching, and sense-perception, and opinion, and imagination, and name, and all other things; and he is neither thought, nor spoken, nor named; and he is not any of the things that are, nor is he known in any of the things that are; and he is all things in all things

²³Cf. Balthasar, "Denys," p. 163: "The imparting of God is not a realm on its own between God and the world, but that movement of God in creation and grace, which on the one hand with regard to what is imparted coincides with God himself, and on the other (as to its goal) with the world. The symbolic divine names (and indeed the intelligible names) are identical, as far as content goes, with the material and spiritual structure of the cosmos."

²⁴*DN* 1.6, 596A-C.

and nothing in any, and he is known to all from all, and to none from any.²⁵

“All things in all things and nothing in any”: the entire content of Dionysios’ thought is contained in this dictum. On the basis of this doctrine, Dionysios overcomes the division between material and spiritual which Father Wesche sees as so central in his thought. Dionysios clearly affirms on the one hand that God is stone no less than he is wisdom, in bodies no less than in minds, and on the other that it is false to call him being, life, or wisdom as it is to call him a rock or a cloud.²⁶ “All things in all things and nothing in any.” And so Dionysios here says that God is known by sense-perception no less than by intellection, and that he is unknowable to intellection no less than he is unknowable to sense-perception. “The mystical tradition of the revelatory Scriptures sometimes hymn [God] . . . as word and mind and being. . . . Such holy figments are more reverend and seem somehow to above material shapes, but these too fall short of the truth of the thearchic likeness, for that is above being and life. There is no light that characterizes It, but every word and mind is incommensurably inadequate to Its likeness.”²⁷ A dichotomy between sense and mind is the farthest thing from Dionysios’ intent, for it would mean that God is inaccessible to sense but accessible to mind, whereas Dionysios invariably insists that God is both inaccessible and accessible to both sense and mind. God’s being all things in all things is the same as his being known or revealed in all, and his being nothing in any is the same as his being absolutely unknowable. And it is this doctrine of “all in all and nothing in any,” as we shall now see, that grounds Dionysios’ understanding of symbolism.²⁸

²⁵DN 7.3, 872A.

²⁶Cf. Lossky, *The Mystical Theological of the Eastern Church* (Crestwood, 1976), p. 40: “What seemed evident at the beginning of the ascent—‘God is not stone, He is not fire’—is less and less so as we attain to the heights of contemplation, impelled by that same apophatic spirit which now causes us to say: ‘God is not being, He is not the good.’ At each step of this ascent . . . it is necessary to guard against making of [images or ideas] a concept. . . . Then one can contemplate the divine beauty itself: God, in so far as he manifests himself in creation.”

²⁷CH 2.3, 140CD.

²⁸Cf. Balthasar, “Denys,” pp. 170-71: “God does not simply—as creative *causa efficiens*—set a ‘second thing’ alongside himself, but . . . the mystery of creation because of its intimacy cannot dispense with the category of participation; . . . God

From the doctrine that creation is theophany, it follows that the entire cosmos is a symbol of God in the realist sense of "symbol."²⁹ According to Father Wesche, "symbol" for Dionysios "does not refer to God's Holy Spirit filling all things with himself, making them 'new' as a result of the incarnation so that now one touches the divine in the earthly, and the earthly itself fully participates in the Divine reality. This is already a 'fact' simply in that everything 'is.'"³⁰ In actuality, however, "symbol" refers precisely to this "fact." Because the world is symbolic simply in that it is, it follows that *all* is symbol. In Dionysios, to be is to be a symbol. Father Wesche rightly says that for him "[a]ll things visible have a symbolic character insofar as they point the mind beyond to the vision of the immaterial God," and he supports this with an apt citation: "The sacred symbols are the perceptible tokens of the conceptual things. They show the way to them and lead to them, and the conceptual things are the source and understanding underlying the perceptible manifestations of hierarchy."³¹ The cosmos as a whole and each being in it is only by being and insofar as it is a symbol of God in an ontological way. That is to say, it is only by revealing and making *present* the absolutely *Other*, by bearing the other within itself. The intelligible realities of which creatures are symbols are God's self-impartations, and thus the creatures make known the unknowable. Every living thing symbolizes Life itself. Every being symbolizes being itself, is indeed the very presence of being. And it is only in beings that we can recognize being and so know God. Only in beings does God, the Nothing, impart and reveal himself as being. Father Wesche objects to this

... imparts being through his being and is present to every being, so that now no being or form can be—or may be—excluded from those which can help us to find him."

²⁹Cf. Semmelroth, "Die Θεολογία συμβολική des Ps.-Dionysius Areopagita," *Scholastik* 27 (1952), pp. 8-9: "Als Neuplatoniker vertritt der Ps.-Areopagit schon philosophisch einen starken Symbolrealismus. . . . Deutlich nämlich zeigt sich in seinen Werken, dass zwischen Zeichen und Bezeichnetem im Symbol nicht nur eine Erkenntnisbeziehung, sondern auch eine Gegenwartsbeziehung obwaltet. . . . Im Denken des Ps.-Areopagiten ist das Symbol realistischer mit dem Symbolisierten verbunden."

³⁰"Christological Doctrine," p. 62.

³¹Ibid. p. 60. More accurately translated, the passage reads, "The sensibly sacred things are images of the intelligibles, and are a leading and a way to them; but the intelligible things are the source and understanding of the hierarchies according to sense-perception." *EH* 2.3.2, 397C.

doctrine on the ground that if sensible things are symbols, "pointing beyond themselves"³² to God, then "the reality of the flesh, i.e. the visible, is minimalized. . . ."³³ In Dionysios, however, just the reverse is true. Because to be is to be a symbol, the very essence of creation is to point beyond itself, to manifest the other. The sensible creature has its *own* full being and value precisely *by* pointing beyond itself. To say that creation, including material creation, is nothing but the symbol of God, is not to depreciate it but to glorify it. It is clear from the doctrine that God is "all things in all things and nothing in any" that Dionysios understands "symbol" in this realist sense as the very presence and manifestation of the transcendent and unknowable God. The creature is and is itself, and it in communion with God, just insofar as it is transparent to him,³⁴ as it points beyond itself to the absolutely other. This is the very meaning of creation as theophany.

For this reason Dionysios, with his symbolic ontology, is among the prime exponents of the Orthodox sacramental vision of reality which Father Schmemmann has expressed so well for the modern world.³⁵ The cosmos is sacramental because it "is an epiphany of God, a means of his revelation, presence, and power. In other words, it . . . is in itself an essential means both of knowledge of God and communion with him, and to be so is its true nature and its ultimate destiny."³⁶ And this is so because the world is essentially symbolic: ". . . [I]t is precisely the very nature of symbol that it reveals and communicates the 'other' *as* precisely the 'other,' the visibility of the invisible *as* invisible, the knowledge of that which cannot be known otherwise, for knowledge here depends on participation—the living encounter with and entrance into that 'epiphany' of reality which the symbol is."³⁷ This is exactly what we have seen in Dionysios'

³²"Christological Doctrine," p. 61.

³³Ibid. p. 62.

³⁴Cf. Semmelroth, "Θεολογία συμβολική," p. 2.

³⁵Cf. Balthasar, "Denys," p. 182: "One can only with difficulty resist the temptation to quote profusely the theological portrayals by this poet of water, wind and clouds, and particularly of the fragrance of God, the delightful interpretations that go right to the heart of such things as bodily eating and drinking and the assimilation of food, sleeping and waking. . . ."

³⁶Alexander Schmemmann, "Worship in a Secular Age," in *For the Life of the World* (Crestwood, 1973), p. 120.

³⁷Idem, "Sacrament and Symbol," in *For the Life of the World*, p. 141.

vision of creation as the revelation and impartation of the unknowable and incommunicable God.³⁸

Dionysios' doctrine of creation as theophany thus overcomes the secularizing dichotomy of "the sacred and the profane," in which the world as such is not in communion with God, in favor of the Orthodox vision of cosmic sacramentality, in which whatever is, insofar as it is, manifests God and makes him present, and indeed exists at all only because it does and by doing this. The uncreated light, divine grace, is not a gift added to an already existing creature, but rather causes the creature to be, creates it. Any reluctance to accept the intrinsically symbolic nature of the world must lead in the end to what Father Schmemmann rightly identifies as the very heart of secularism: "What . . . [a secularist] emphatically negates is precisely the sacramentality of man and the world. A secularist views the world as containing within itself its meaning. . . ."³⁹ Sacramentality means precisely that the creature does "point beyond itself" and *thereby* has its being, meaning, and value.⁴⁰ Father Schmemmann goes on to say that although the secularist may believe in God, "this changes nothing in his fundamental rejection of 'epiphany': the primordial intuition that everything in this world and the world itself not only have *elsewhere* the cause and principle of their existence, but are

³⁸Cf. Balthasar, "Denys," p. 164: The movement of theophany "is the manifestation of the unmanifest. . . . Manifestation conceived of in the Greek, not the Indian, sense, as becoming visible in reality—not as *maya*, mere seeming illusion, but always as (real) manifestation of the unmanifest . . . ;" and p. 185: "[F]or Denys what is Incomprehensible is to be found in what is really comprehensible, for it is in every case the incomprehensible God in his totality who makes himself comprehensible in his communications." Cf. also Semmelroth, "Θεολογία συμβολική," p. 5: "Diese Doppelwirklichkeit, dass Gott der Welt unendlich fern ist und doch in ihr aufleuchtet, läßt die sichtbare Welt zum Symbol Gottes werden;" and p. 10: "Die Tatsache, dass im Symbol das Symbolisierte irgendwie gegenwärtig ist, schiebt nach Dionysius Keineswegs aus, dass das Erkenntnisbemühen des Menschen aufgerufen wird, die Hülle des Symbols zu durchdringen. Und hier zeigt sich in Wesen und Funktion des Symbols wiederum eine Dialektik: Das Symbol ist zugleich offenbarend und verhüllend."

³⁹"Worship," p. 124.

⁴⁰Cf. Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World*, p. 17: "When we see the world as an end in itself, everything becomes itself a value and consequently loses all value, because only in God is found the meaning (value) of everything, and the world is meaningful only when it is the 'sacrament' of God's presence. Things treated merely as things in themselves destroy themselves because only in God have they any life." Cf. Semmelroth, "Θεολογία συμβολική," p. 2.

themselves the manifestation of that *elsewhere*. . . ."⁴¹ Here in contemporary terminology is Dionysios' "all things in all things and nothing in any." For Dionysios all creation is sacred insofar as it is, because it is the presence of God.⁴² The sacred is sacred, as Mircea Eliade says, because it is *ontophany*⁴³ (splendid neologism!), and every being is a manifestation of Being, God presenting himself outside himself to the world.

For the same reason, the dichotomy between mind and sense that Father Wesche sees in Dionysios disappears when he is rightly understood. As we have seen, the real meaning of the doctrine that sensible things are symbols of the intelligible is not that they must be left behind in a movement from sense-perception to "pure" intellection, but that the sensible things themselves reveal God as the intelligible principle of their existence, while apart from creatures God is beyond intellection no less than sense-perception. Hence God as *Deus absconditus* is inaccessible to both mind and sense, while as *Deus revelatus*, that is, as Creator, he is accessible to *both*. "Of him there is sense-perception. . . ." This understanding determines Dionysios' attitude to sensible beings. Precisely because they are symbols they are not to be despised but exalted: "We must, then, contrary to the popular assumption [i.e. that which does not see sensible things as symbols] cross over into the sacred symbols in a way befitting the sacred, and not dishonor them, because they are the offspring and impressions of the divine marks, and manifest images of the ineffable and supernatural visions."⁴⁴ Is this opposed to the Orthodox view of icon and sacrament? And because the very essence of creatures is to be symbols, to know them truly is to know them *as* symbols and thereby to know the unknowable God through them. We must "understand that the beautiful things which appear are images of the fairness that does not appear, and the sensible fragrances

⁴¹"Worship," p. 124.

⁴²Cf. Semmelreth, "Gottes ausstrahlendes Licht," p. 493: "Von dem Licht des heiligen Gottes durchstrahlt, ist die ganze Welt eine heilige Ordnung, in der es keine Scheidung zwischen weltlich und heilig, diesseitig und jenseitig gibt. . . . Es gibt nicht einen materiellen, irdischen Bereich, der in irgendeiner Selbständigkeit neben einem heiligen Bereich bestände. . . . Hierarchie ist der Inbegriff der Ordnung aller heiligen Dinge. Heilige Dinge aber sind alle Kreaturen."

⁴³*The Sacred and Profane*, tr. Willard R. Trask (New York, 1959), pp. 97, 117, 155.

⁴⁴*Ep.* 9.2, 1108C.

are impressions of the intelligible distributions.”⁴⁵ To understand the material things in this way, as symbols, is not to leave them behind but to know them as they really are. Deification, says Dionysios, is “the knowledge of beings *as* beings, the vision and understanding of sacred truth, the divine participation in uniform perfection. . . .”⁴⁶ Here we see the union of sense and intellect (“vision and understanding”) and of the gnostic and the ontological (“knowledge” and “participation”) in a true recognition of beings as they really are, that is, as symbols of God.

Knowledge as Communion

Central to Father Wesche’s critique is the fundamental distinction he sees in Dionysios between “being” and “knowing.”⁴⁷ “Insofar as all things ‘are’ they ‘touch’ God directly for they derive they being directly from the good. But ‘to be’ is not to be saved or deified; rather this comes from gnosis.”⁴⁸ As a result, he argues, deification is possible not for all creatures but only for men and angels as intelligent beings, and only for men’s minds in separation from their bodies. In response, let us turn first to the passage Father Wesche cites to ground this interpretation: “All things desire [God]: the intellectual and rational beings, gnostically; the things below these sensibly; and other things by vital motion or essential and habitual fitness.”⁴⁹ What Dionysios describes here is not a dichotomy but, on the contrary, a continuum of modes of communion with God. First, the higher types of participation do not exclude the lower. Because man is and is alive and is sensitive as well as being intelligent, he participates in God in all these ways, not by knowledge alone. But further, all these activities, not “being” alone, constitute ontological communion with and movement toward God.⁵⁰ Dionysios’ purpose is not to separate men and angels from all other beings, but to show

⁴⁵CH 1.3, 121CD.

⁴⁶EH 1.3, 376A.

⁴⁷“Christological Doctrine,” p. 56 and *passim*.

⁴⁸Ibid. p. 56.

⁴⁹DN 1.5, 593D.

⁵⁰This continuity is even clearer in a closely parallel passage: “All things desire [the Good]: the intellectual and rational beings, gnostically; the sensitive, sensibly; those without a share in sense-perception, by the implanted motion of vital desire; those which are not living but only are, by their fitness for only essential participation.” DN 4.4, 700B.

that all things participate in God in ways proper to them, and that intellectual knowledge is the specific mode given, along with all the others, to intelligent beings, as living is the specific mode given to all living things, and so on. Thus all the proper activities of all creatures constitute their proper communion with God. The "anagogy" which Father Wesche sees as an exclusively intellectual movement to God given only to men and angels, is in fact the ontological movement of all things to God. God is "love and charity, which at once moves and draws up (ἀναγώγων) to himself . . . and . . . he is the revelation of himself through himself . . . and erotic motion . . . overflowing from the Good to beings, and drawn back to the good."⁵¹ This is the theophany that does not merely give gnosis to intelligent beings, but causes all things to be and draws them to God in ontological anagogy.

For this reason Dionysios insists that knowledge is union with God. In knowing God we receive him, we take him into ourselves or participate in him. "And again, the most divine knowledge of God is that which is known through unknowing, by the union above mind, when the mind, turning away from all beings, setting aside even itself, is united to the super-radiant rays, and then and there illumined by the inscrutable depth of wisdom."⁵² In the ancient manner, Dionysios regards knowledge not merely as a series of true propositions about its object, but as the actual union of the knowing subject with the known object. "For if *knowledge unites the knower and the known*, but ignorance is always the cause to the ignorant of change and separation from itself, nothing will move the one who believes the truth . . . from the hearth of the true faith, in which it will have the stability of unmoved and changeless identity."⁵³ To know God is to be ontologically united with him by anagogy or participation, and therefore to be solidly grounded in being; while ignorance of God, because it is disunion from him, the failure to participate in him, is the ontological dissipation of the creature's very self.

Father Wesche recognizes that in Dionysios gnosis is union with God, but objects that it is a strictly "neotic" union which leaves the body behind. Evidently he regards νοῦς as merely "intellect" in the modern sense of the term. But this not the meaning that it bears in

⁵¹DN 4.16, 712C; cf. also DN 4.17, 713D.

⁵²DN 7.3, 872AB.

⁵³DN 7.4, 872D.

ancient and patristic literature. We may quote the excellent definition of νοῦς given by Palmer, Sherrard, and Ware in the glossary appended to their translation of *The Philokalia*:

[T]he highest faculty in man, through which . . . he knows God or the inner essences or principles [i.e. the intelligible logoi] . . . of created things by means of direct apprehension or spiritual perception. . . . [T]he intellect does not function by formulating abstract concepts and then arguing on this basis to a conclusion reached through deductive reasoning, but it understands divine truth by means of immediate experience, intuition or 'simple cognition.' . . . The intellect dwells in the 'depths of the soul'; it constitutes the innermost aspect of the heart. . . . The intellect is the organ of contemplation. . . .⁵⁴

In Dionysios as in the other Fathers, "intellect" functions precisely as the center and summation of all our lesser cognitive activities, not the escape from them. Therefore, contrary to Father Wesche's interpretation, all these activities, including discursive reason and even bodily sense-perception, are modes of knowledge and communion with God, insofar as they are gathered into and informed by νοῦς. After explaining that angels have a purely "noetic," non-discursive knowledge of God, Dionysios continues: "Souls, too, [as well as angels] have the rational faculty in a discursive manner and proceed in a circle around the truth of beings, and in being divided and manifold in variety they fall short of the unified minds. But by the concentration of the many into one, they are made worthy of intellections equal to the angelic insofar as this is proper and possible for souls." What follows is even more striking: "But also sense-perceptions themselves . . . are echoes of wisdom."⁵⁵ The function of νοῦς, then, is not leave sense-perceptions behind but to gather and interpret them as revelations of God.

This explains the role of νοῦς in relation to the sensible "symbols." "Now [i.e. in this world] . . . we use the proper symbols for divine things, and from these agains we are proportionally drawn up to the simply and united truth of the intelligible visions, and, beyond all intellection of deiform things at our level, our intellectual activities

⁵⁴(London and Boston, 1979), 1, p. 361.

⁵⁵*DN* 7.2, 868BC.

ceasing, we throw ourselves as far as is right into the superessential ray, in which all the limist of all knowledge are super-ineffably pre-established, which can be neither thought nor spoken nor contemplated at all in any way, because it is transcendent to all, and super-unknowable. . . ."⁵⁶ Beginning with the sensible symbols, we rise up, not *away from* sense to mind, but *through* sense by mind to God who transcends both. Far from saying that we must escape from senseible symbols to know an intellegible God, Dionysios insists that we *need* the symbols to know God because it is only in them that the super-intellegible, unknowable God reveals himself as intelligible. Thus it is through intellection that we truly know sensible things as they are, as symbols of God, grasping their intelligible logoi or inner principles, and thereby know God in knowing the sense-objects.

For this reason, Dionysios is one of the few Fathers (Saint John the Theologian himself and Saint Gregory Palamas are others who spring to mind) to affirm unequivocally that we *know God by sense-perception*. This is so important that we must cite the vital passage yet again: "God is know in all things and apart sfrom all things; and . . . of him there is intellection, and reason, and science, and touching, and sense-perception. . . ."⁵⁷ What less depreciation, what greater exaltation of the senses could we desire? So far from regarding sense-perception as a mode of cognition to be surpassed and left behind, Dionysios specially insists that we must literally see, smell, touch God with our bodily senses. If, like all the Fathers, he regards intellect as our highest faculty, this because it is only through the intellect recognizing sensible beings as symbols that we can see God with our bodily eyes.⁵⁸ The senses must become intellectual in order that we

⁵⁶DN 1.4, 592C-93A.

⁵⁷Cf. also Balthasar, "Denys," p. 179: "Denys contemplates the divine symbols in creation and the Church with an aesthetic delight. Things are not simply the occasion for his seeing God; rather, he sees God in things. Colors, shapes, essences and properties are for him immediate theophanies. . . ."

⁵⁸Palamas remarks that the disciples saw the *intelligible*, uncreated light of the Transfiguration with their *bodily* eyes, but that this was possible only because these eyes, being human, were informed by νοῦς. Thus, he says, if there had been irrational animals present on Mt. Tabor, they would not have seen the light. "It is the intellect that sees through human eyes." *Triads (Défense des saints hésychastes)*, ed. J. Meyendorff (Louvain, 1959), I.3.27, p. 169. Cf. also Balthasar, "Denys," p. 184: "Only through the mediation of an understanding spirit can the sensible symbols speak of God."

may recognize God as all in all. Hence we find in Dionysios the traditional doctrine of the "spiritual senses."⁵⁹ We experience God sensuously in this way by noetically contemplating the sensible according to its intelligible *whatness*, its very being, its divine logos, and thus not by abandoning it but by seeing it as it really is, as sacramental theophany.⁶⁰ Just as creatures can be only by transfigured in the intelligible light which is God's self-revelation, so we can truly know them only through our intellectually transfigured senses, seeing the light of God by which they exist shining through them. In this Dionysios is in complete accord with the entire patristic tradition which exalts intellect as the faculty of contemplation by which we know even sensible creatures as they really are and thus know God.⁶¹

Since knowledge is communion with God, it is constitutive of the very being of creatures. There can be no distinction between "being" and "knowing." To know God is to be; to be is to know God. Because of the continuum of modes of communion that we have observed, this is true even for inanimate objects. Just as intellection is the mode of being proper to intelligent beings, so we may say that simple sense-perception, vital motion, and essential fitness are the attenuated modes of knowledge proper to animals, plants and stones respectively. This identity of knowledge and being is the immediate outcome of the idea of creation as theophany. If for God to create is to make himself known, then for the creature to be created, to come to be, is for it to know him. Knowledge is the ontological movement of the creature toward God. But this upward movement of participation is not something added to an already existing creature. Rather, it is by moving toward God in desire for him that creatures come to be at all. The act of creation is not only God's reaching out to offer himself

⁵⁹Ep. 9.4, 1112A. Cf. Walther Völker, *Kontemplation und Ekstase bei Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita* (Weisbaden, 1958), pp. 172-74, and Lossky *Vision de Dieu* (Neuchâtel, 1962), p. 106.

⁶⁰Cf. Balthasar, "Denys," p. 169: "The same knowledge of God demands both a deeper penetration *into* the image and also a more sublime transcendence *beyond* it, and the two are not separated one from another but are the more fully integrated, the more perfectly they are achieved."

⁶¹A glance at *The Philokalia* shows that not Dionysios alone but virtually all the spiritual masters of the Church teach that the vision or knowledge of God takes place through *νοῦς*, that the union with God is "noetic." If we are to reject this aspect of Dionysios' doctrine as unacceptable "intellectualism," we must reject the Church's entire spiritual and mystical tradition.

to creatures; it is also his summoning creatures into communion with himself, drawing them from non-being into being by the magnetic attraction of the divine Beauty. "By desiring [the good] they have both being and well-being."⁶² God creates, is the cause of being to the world, by being not only its formal cause but also its final cause: "The Beautiful is the source of all, as making cause, and moving wholes, and holding [them] together by the love of its own beauty; and the limit of all, and beloved, as final cause; for on account of the Beautiful all things come to be."⁶³ But we have seen that this upward motion of desire for God is also the creatures' knowledge of him. Creatures come to *be* by striving to see, that is, to know God, who is Beauty itself.

The creative downward movement and revelation of God to the world, then, is also his creative upward drawing of the world into knowledge of, that is communion with, himself. "Every procession of the light-revelation . . . coming to us in a good way, fills us again in an upward-drawing way, as a one-making power, and returns [us] toward the unity of the Father who gathers. . . ."⁶⁴ This motion, at once reaching down and drawing up, is not merely the "gnostic" illumination of an already existing creature. Rather it is the act of creation itself. The "rays" of himself, the uncreated light which God sends down to the world and which draw the world up to God, are rays of *being*.⁶⁵ Light is a superb metaphor for being because of the fundamental principle that for the creature to be is to have constitutive determination, the whatness or identity by which it can be recognized or "seen" by intellect. "The good is hymned under the name of light. . . . For thus the goodness of the Godhead which is beyond all extends from the highest and noblest essences to the last . . . and it illumines those that are able, and *creates* (δημιουργεῖ), and vivifies, and holds together, and perfects; and it is the measure of beings . . . and number, and order, and containment, and cause, and end."⁶⁶ It

⁶²DN 4.1, 696A.

⁶³DN 4.7, 704A.

⁶⁴CH 1.1, 120B-121A.

⁶⁵Cf. Semmelroth, "Θεολογία συμβολική," pp. 2-3: "Gott als das ἀγαθόν gibt den Dingen ihr Dasein aus sich heraus in der φωτοδοσία . . .," and p. 4: "[D]er Areopagit mit Vorliebe die Schöpfung Gottes als Ausstrahlung des göttlichen Lichtes . . . schildert. . . . Von hier aus wird die ganze Schöpfungstheologie des Ps.-Areopagiten Lichttheologie."

⁶⁶DN 4.4, 697BC.

is by being measure, number, order, that is, intelligible form, that God creates beings.⁶⁷ The divine intelligible light which illumines them is their being, the determination or form which causes them to be. Just as the sensible light of the sun causes things at once to live and to be visible, so the intelligible light of God causes them at once to be and to be knowable.⁶⁸ Thus all the divine activities *ad extra* are the giving of being, for being is the "form of forms," containing in itself all the more specific divine operations.⁶⁹ All the divine acts, of purification, illumination, perfection, and so on, are nothing but God's making things fully to be. For no one teaches more clearly than Dionysios that creatures do not first exist and then enter into communion with God, but rather they come to be by entering into such communion. And since knowledge is communion, it is impossible for him to conceive a distinction between being and knowing.

Consequently, whenever Dionysios speaks of "knowledge" or "illumination," we may substitute "being." Thus Father Wesche is right in observing that for Dionysios "'Gnosis' . . . is the content of salvation and deification,"⁷⁰ but this "gnosis" is being itself for the creature which has it. It is noetic in the inclusive sense of νοῦς, comprehending sensitive, vital, and essential as well as "intellectual" communion. Or again, Father Wesche says that "to act as a symbol is to mediate gnosis: to convey deifying knowledge of God to the lower orders."⁷¹ Yes; but this is to say that to symbolize is to convey being to them, which as we shall see is precisely the function of the sacraments. In attributing this central ontological role to knowledge, Dionysios is in full accord with the innumerable places in both the Old and the New Testaments in which communion with God is presented as the knowledge of him. "For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the rivers swell the sea."⁷²

⁶⁷Cf. Wisdom 11:21.

⁶⁸See DN 4.4, 700A-C. The image, of course, goes back to Plato, *Republic* VI, 509BC. It was adopted by many of the Church Fathers, who commonly refer to Christ as the "intelligible Sun of Righteousness," adding the word "intelligible" to the text of Malachi 4:2 with precisely this meaning.

⁶⁹See esp. DN 5.5, 820A-C, discussed at greater length below. Cf. Klaus Kremer, *Die neuplatonische Seinsphilosophie und ihre Wirkung auf Thomas von Aquin* (Leiden, 1966), p. 315.

⁷⁰"Christological Doctrine," p. 60.

⁷¹Ibid. p. 61.

⁷²Habbakuk 2.14; Isaiah 11.9.

This eschatological union of all the world with God is the fulfilment of creation, the achievement of God's purpose in creating. This knowledge is the uncreated light, the glory of the Lord that fills heaven and earth and makes them to *be*. How then shall we object to the doctrine that salvation, that is fulness of being, is knowledge of God? As our Lord himself says, "This is eternal life: that they should *know* Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."⁷³

Fall and Redemption

At this point the obvious question arises: if simply to be is to be in communion with God, what place is there for a movement of the existing creature into communion with him, that is, for deification as distinct from creation, or for a fall in which the creature still exists but has lost its communion with God? This is central to Father Wesche's objection to Dionysios. He repeatedly argues that since for Dionysios mere being itself is a direct ontological communion with God, deification must belong to a different order, which he concludes is the "gnostic." And since creatures can fall and yet be, the fall too must pertain only to the order of knowledge.⁷⁴ What this objection does not recognize is that in Dionysios being itself is not a fixed quantity granted to creatures once and for all in their creation, but rather a dynamic activity, a perfection which may be possessed in an infinite continuum of degrees. Thus deification and fallenness are not conditions superadded to a creature which rigidly "is." Rather they are nothing other than the fulness or the deficiency of being. Contrary to Father Wesche's repeated assertion, then, in Dionysios to be *is* to be deified, to participate wholly in God who is being.⁷⁵ God's purpose in creating the world is that it may *be*,⁷⁶ and thus be the perfect expression of himself. This identity of being and being deified is the immediate outcome of the doctrine that the world does not first exist and then enter into communion with God, but comes to be only by entering into communion with him, by receiving his

⁷³John 17:3. On this text in relation to Dionysios' doctrine of gnosis see Golitzin, "On the Other Hand," p. 318, and esp. Semmelroth, "Gottes ausstrahlendes Licht," p. 498.

⁷⁴"Christological Doctrine," pp. 56-57, 64, 67; "Appendix," p. 326.

⁷⁵Cf. Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, p. 97: "The notion of creation in Dionysios is so close to that of deification that it is hard to distinguish between the first state of creatures and their final end, union with God."

⁷⁶Cf. Wisdom 1:14: ἔκτισεν γὰρ εἰς τὸ εἶναι τὰ πάντα.

self-impartation.

Father Wesche says that in Dionysios, "[e]verything is good and real and alive just by virtue of being, and there seems little to support the doctrine of a Fall in which all of creation has been separated from God by man's sin and has fallen into the chasm of death and disintegration."⁷⁷ Apparently Father Wesche himself would deny the principle that to be is to be good.⁷⁸ But this principle, universally affirmed by the Fathers, is the immediate consequence of the doctrine of creation. "And God looked on all that he had made, and behold it was very good."⁷⁹ To say that a creature can fully be and yet be evil is to attribute positive subsistence to evil and thus to claim that God has created it. Since all that is is absolutely dependent on God, the good, existing only by participation in him, the lack of good can be understood only as a deficiency or privation of being. Hence we do find the doctrine of the fall in Dionysios, but it is a fall *toward non-being*.⁸⁰ "All beings, insofar as they are, are also good, and from the good; but insofar as they are deprived of the Good, they are neither good nor beings."⁸¹ And so

that which has no share whatever of the good is neither a being nor among beings. . . . But rather, all beings *are* more and less to the extent that they participate in the good. . . . And that which is evil, being altogether fallen from good, will be

⁷⁷"Appendix," p. 326.

⁷⁸See esp. "Christological Doctrine," p. 56, where he apparently has difficulty with Dionysios' utterly traditional doctrine that "[e]vil as such cannot possess being at all because being comes wholly from the good. . . . Therefore, evil 'is' not, for if it were, it would not be evil. Being, in other words, is wholly good. . . ."

⁷⁹Genesis 1:31. This doctrine represents perhaps the greatest meeting point of all between Orthodoxy and Neoplatonism, which sees all that is (including, be it noted, the sensible world) as the effusion of the good and therefore understands evil as non-being. If we reject this, as Father Wesche would apparently have us do, we fall into a Manichaean dualism which gives evil a positive reality over against God.

⁸⁰Here again Dionysios is in agreement with the patristic Tradition. Saint Gregory of Nyssa, for instance, frequently explains that evil is privation of being and refers to sin as ἐξουθένωσις. See e.g. *Catechetical Oration*, 7; PG 45. 32CD, and *In Inscriptiones Psalmorum*, in *Opera*, vol. 5, ed. J. McDonough and P. Alexander (Leiden, 1966), 1.8, pp. 62-63; PG 44. 480AB, among many other texts. On this topic in Gregory, see Alden A. Mosshammer, "Non-being and Evil in Gregory of Nyssa," *Vigiliae Christianae* 44.2 (1990), pp. 136-67. Saint Maximus often speaks of the fall as a fall "toward" or "into non-being," e.g. *Ambigua* 7; PG 91, 1084D; *Ambigua* 41; PG 91, 1308C; *Mystagogia* 1; PG 91, 668B.

⁸¹DN 4.20, 720AB.

neither in the things which are more good nor in those which are less good. . . . For if the good is altogether removed, nothing whatever will be, neither good, nor mixed, nor evil itself. For if what is evil is imperfect good, by the complete absence of the good both the imperfect and the perfect good will be absent. . . . Therefore evil is not a being.⁸²

Father Wesche's objection assumes that the world in its present condition is fully real. For Dionysios, however, beings is variable, and since the world is fallen it only imperfectly *is*. Because to be is to be good, the fall is precisely the fall into "death and disintegration," the fall away from being into the "nothingness of death" that Father Wesche rightly demands to see. "The life of many passions and the end of the corruptive death received human nature, which in the beginning unintelligibly slipped away from the divine goods. . . . [Thus man] miserably exchanged immortality for mortality. . . . But also, having willingly fallen from the divine and anagogic life, he was drawn to the opposite extreme . . . and piteously *fell into non-existence* (*ἀνπαρχ(α)ς*) and risked perdition."⁸³ Such a doctrine, with its emphasis on passion, mortality, corruption, and above all non-being, is fully in accord with the traditional Orthodox ontological understanding of the fall. Since to be is to be in communion with God, the creature's very being requires its own choice, and therefore by sin it can diminish and all but abolish its own existence.⁸⁴ The vital dogma that to be is to be good is the very ground of the ontological vision of the fall, if we but recognize that because of our sin we and the world around us are not truly ourselves (for our true self, our being, is found only in God) and therefore hardly even exist.⁸⁵

This understanding of being and the fall in turn determines

⁸²DN 4.20, 720D-21B.

⁸³EH 3.3.11, 440C-41A.

⁸⁴Thus after speaking of the affinity between creation and deification in Dionysios (see above, n. 75), Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, p. 97, goes on to say, "In fact, because this union [with God] . . . presupposes 'co-operation,' the agreement of wills and therefore liberty, it is possible to see in the initial state of the created cosmos an unstable perfection. . . ."

⁸⁵It is hard to see how Dionysios could regard the fall as a "fall into materiality," as Father Wesche accuses him of doing ("Appendix," p. 326) if, as Father Wesche himself admits ("Christological Doctrine," p. 60), he regards matter as good. In any case Dionysios is utterly unequivocal that evil is not materiality but loss of being.

Dionysios' view of the nature of salvation. Because to be is to be deified, salvation is the restoration to the creature of the fulness of being that it has lost through sin. Here again Dionysios is explicit: God is named Salvation "because he salvifically rescues whole things from the worse" and "preserves all things in themselves, unchangeable and undisturbed and without fall toward the worse, and guards all things. . . ." "The worse," as we have seen, is the loss of being. And this Salvation is also named Redemption "in that it does not let the things which truly are *fall toward non-being* (πρὸς τὸ μὴ εἶναι), and in that even if something has gone astray into discord and disorder and suffered some diminution of the perfection of its proper goods, it redeems this from passions and weakness and privation, filling what is lacking, and paternally overlooking what is out of place, and raising up from evil."⁸⁶ Since a being *is* by possessing its proper goods, by being formed or ordered, this redemptive "raising up from evil" is nothing but the renewal of full being. To use a mundane image, God as Savior and Redeemer stops the leak in the creature, made to be a vessel of being, and refills it with being, that is with himself, out of his infinite supply. Salvation is most fundamentally salvation from non-being.⁸⁷

This deification emphatically and necessarily includes the body as well as the soul. As Life God "gives to men, as to mixed beings, an angelic life as is possible . . . and . . . has proclaimed that he will transpose the whole of us (δύλους ἡμᾶς), I mean souls and their yoke-fellows, bodies, to complete and immortal life."⁸⁸ This is no mere unwilling lip-service to the doctrine of bodily resurrection, but rather an inevitable aspect of Dionysian ontology. Because for Dionysios the fundamental difference between the uncreated and the created is not between spiritual and material but between God and beings, it follows that the body no less than the soul, insofar as it *is*, participates in God. Hence he expands on the deification of the body: "For the sacred souls . . . in the rebirth will have a transposition to the changeless, most deiform state. But the pure bodies yoked with and travelling with the sacred souls, enlisted and struggling together

⁸⁶DN 8.9, 896D-97B.

⁸⁷Cf. Semmelroth, "Erlösung und Erlöser im System des Ps.-Dionysius Areopagita," *Scholastik* 24 (1949) 372: "Die göttliche Soteria besteht darin, dass sie jedem Geschöpf die eigene und von den anderen reine (abgegrenzte) Wesenheit und Ordnung bewahrt' . . . Erlösung ist nach ihm Bewahrung."

⁸⁸DN 6.2, 856CD.

in their divine sweat, in the changeless establishment of the souls in the divine life, will receive together their own resurrection. For being united to the sacred souls to which they were united in this life, becoming members of Christ, they will receive the deiform and incorruptible, immoral and blessed rest.”⁸⁹

In view of this, how can Father Wesche say that in deification “the flesh disappears from sight altogether”⁹⁰ and that “salvation consists in knowledge which ultimately leaves physical reality behind and out of account”?⁹¹ Indeed, Dionysios goes out of his way to ridicule precisely such “spiritualizing” doctrines: “There are those of the unholy who irrationally believe that they [i.e. bodies] go into non-existence, and others who hold that the bodily connection of souls is broken once and for all, because it would be inappropriate for them [i.e. souls] in deiform life and blessed repose.” These are the true “gnostics,” to whom Father Wesche would rightly object: the archenemies of Dionysios, who glorifies the body as the manifestation of God. “But none of the sacred men will ever fall into such errors; but they know that the whole of them will receive Christiform repose. . . .”⁹² How clearly need one speak to avoid being accused of denying the deification of the body? As we have seen, salvation does indeed consist in knowledge, but this includes the body’s knowledge of God by sense-perception. Thus Dionysios’ doctrine is all of a piece: the sense-knowledge of God through the transfigured senses is also bodily communion with God in deification.⁹³ “If the one who has fallen asleep lived a life pleasing to God in soul and body, the body which struggled along with it . . . will be honored with the holy soul. Hence the divine righteousness gives repose in return to [the soul] with its body, as a co-traveller and co-participant in the holy (or opposite) life. Wherefore the ordinances of the sacred rites [i.e. funerary rites] *give thearchic communions to both*.” These rites “. . . sanctify the whole man (τὸν ὅλου ἀνθρώπου) and sacredly effect his whole salvation.”⁹⁴

⁸⁹EH 7.1, 553AB.

⁹⁰“Christological Doctrine,” p. 62.

⁹¹Ibid. p. 68.

⁹²EH 7.1.2; 553BC.

⁹³Cf. Semmelroth, “Θεολογία συμβολική,” p. 11: “Das Positive des Symbolings läßt den Menschen als leibseelische Ganzheit mit dem in ihm verhüllten Göttlichen in Kontakt treten: positive Symboltheologie.”

⁹⁴EH 7.3.9, 565BC.

Christ and the Sacraments

It is in the context of this soteriology that we must understand Dionysios' doctrine of Christ and the sacraments. Father Wesche asks, "If gnosis is the chief function and goal of the Church, then why must Jesus become fully man and die on the cross?"⁹⁵ He acknowledges that for Dionysius "Jesus is the Divine Logos who has become fully man,"⁹⁶ but argues that "the Incarnation . . . is 'merely' a symbol which saves only by providing for the mind the supreme perceptible token for its contemplation of God."⁹⁷ Hence he concludes that the Incarnation becomes "superfluous" in Dionysios' doctrine.⁹⁸ In other words, the Incarnation, although real, serves only to "show" the "immaterial" procession of God and the world's participation in or return to God, rather than itself constituting this communion.⁹⁹

Once again the objection depends on the false distinction between God's self-impartation and his self-revelation. For Dionysios all creation is incarnation, because it is theophany. If he does not speak explicitly of Christ as often as some would like, this is not because of any lack of "Christocentrism" in his thought. On the contrary, it is because the Incarnation is not one part or aspect of his ontology, but rather constitutes the whole of it, that he does not need to refer to it expressly at every turn. Dionysios does indeed, as Father Wesche says, present the Incarnation in terms of the pattern of procession and return, but for this very reason the entire motion of God to the world comes to be seen as incarnation. "As regards the love for man with respect to Christ, this, I think, intimates that the Superessential, out of his hiddenness, for revelation to us (εἰς τὴν καθ' ἡμᾶς ἐμφάνειαν) has come forth, being made a being in a human way."¹⁰⁰ The Incarnation does serve to "show;" but what it shows is not a fact *about* God (*that* God proceeds to the world) but rather God himself. The Incarnation, then, is the fulness of God's self-revelation, by which God really becomes knowable and accessible to us by becoming a creature, a being, and thus makes possible the knowledge which

⁹⁵"Christological Doctrine," p. 64.

⁹⁶Ibid. p. 65.

⁹⁷Ibid. p. 65.

⁹⁸Ibid. pp. 63-64.

⁹⁹Ibid. pp. 68-72.

¹⁰⁰*Ep.* 3, 1069B.

is ontological communion with himself. It is in so far as the world is the body of Christ that we have sense-knowledge of God. "For the one and simple and hidden of Jesus, the most thearchic word, by his humanification for us, has come without change into the composite and visible by goodness and love for man, and beneficently gained our one-making communion with him. . . ." ¹⁰¹ As always, revelation and communion go together. Thus Dionysios' ontology of cosmic symbolism becomes an ontology of cosmic incarnation. As he goes on to say in *Ep. 3*, "He is hidden after the revelation, or, to speak more divinely, even *in* the revelation; for this is the hidden mystery of Jesus, inexpressible by any word or mind; but what is said remains ineffable, and what is thought, unknowable." ¹⁰² Here Dionysios presents the Incarnation as "symbol" in precisely the sense we have seen described by Father Schmemmann. God incarnate is the revelation of the unknowable as unknowable, the presence of the other as other, the visible image of the invisible God, and is thus the supreme symbol of himself. ¹⁰³

Consequently, "the" incarnation, the historical particularity of Christ, is the fulfilment of all creation. Only in him, as his body, does the created world attain the fulness of its being as the presence of God. Hence there is no discontinuity between creation and incarnation. All creation, that is, all theophany, is incarnation, and "the" incarnation is the complete realization of God's creative self-giving. ¹⁰⁴ The world does not first exist and then become symbolic,

¹⁰¹ *EH* 3.3.12, 444A.

¹⁰² 1069B.

¹⁰³ Saint Maximos likewise teaches that in becoming incarnate God "became a type and symbol of himself and symbolically revealed himself from himself . . .," *Ambigua* 10; PG 91, 1165D. Cf. Semmelroth, "Θεολογία συμβολική," p. 9: "Als christlicher Neuplatoniker glaubte der Ps.-Areopagit, dass die sichtbare Welt als Symbol unsichtbar göttlicher Wirklichkeiten nach dem Ursymbol Christus gebaut sei, d. h. die symbolisierte Realität nicht nur zeichenhaft vor den erinnernden Geist stelle, sondern irgendwie real in sich enthalte. . . . Er sah die Ahnung platonischen Philosophierens in der nach und von Christus gesetzten Heilsordnung vollendet erfüllt."

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Balthasar, "Denys," p. 176: "[T]he Incarnation has to be seen in a measure in the context of the other theophanies—as their consummation . . ." Semmelroth, "Θεολογία συμβολική," p. 5: "Und . . . werden wir zum vollkommensten aller Symbole geführt, in dem aller Symbolismus seine letzte christliche, auch bei Dionysus betonte Begründung effährt: dem Gottmenschen Jesus Christus." Once again the doctrine of Dionysius is comparable to that of Father Schmemmann, "Worship," p. 122: "Christ is . . . the fulness of God' manifestation and presence by means of

become the revelation of God, by being taken into Christ; rather its intrinsically symbolic or incarnational nature, lost in the fall, is fulfilled only in Christ.¹⁰⁵ For this reason Dionysios describes deification in specifically Christological terms. In his discourse on the resurrection of the body, for instance, three times in a single column he presents this Christologically, insisting that whole men, body and soul, become "members of Christ" and "Christiform."¹⁰⁶ Because the incarnation is the purpose, indeed the very content, of creation, all the world is fulfilled, that is, deified, by being assumed into the unique Christ.¹⁰⁷ Again, Dionysios sees deification not simply as transfiguration but as transfiguration *in Christ*: "Then, when we become incorruptible and immortal, and attain the Christiform and most blessed rest, 'we shall be ever with the Lord,' as the Scripture says, being filled in all-holy contemplations with his visible theophany shining around us in brightest flashings, as [it did] the disciples in the most divine Transfiguration."¹⁰⁸

This doctrine makes plain the place of the Cross in our redemption. As the liturgy of Saint Basil says, "He descended by the Cross into hell that he might fill all things with himself:" that is, with Being, to make all things truly to *be*, to fill all with the uncreated light which is himself, to deliver us from the hell of non-being into which we are fallen. "Jesus went down even to death through the Cross by the divine and extreme descent, beneficently pulling up and renewing those who are 'baptized . . . into his death' from the ancient corruptive swallowing-up death to divine and everlasting existence."¹⁰⁹ Again, after describing the fall into non-being, Dionysios explains that the Incarnation saves us because by it the Thearchy "gave . . . us communion with it. . . . For it filled what is dark in our mind with blessed

the world. He is the true and full Sacrament because he is the fulfillment of the world's essential 'sacramentality.' "

¹⁰⁵Cf. Balthasar, "Denys," p. 177: "And the union of the world and God, which is already philosophically the only possible justification of its multiplicity and its existence, is brought to completion precisely in the Incarnation. . . ."

¹⁰⁶*EH* 7.1.1-2, 553B,C,D.

¹⁰⁷Cf. Semmelroth, "Erlösung und Erlöser," p. 375: "Im Gottmenschen ist nach Ps.-Dionysius die ganze Schöpfung tatsächlich irgendwie zusammengefasst."

¹⁰⁸*DN* 1.4, 592BC.

¹⁰⁹*EH* 4.3.10, 484B. This passage, which Father Wesche admits does not fully fit into his interpretation of Dionysios' soteriology ("Christological Doctrine," p. 68), again affirms the idea of salvation from non-being.

and most divine light and *ordered the formless* with deiform beauties.”¹¹⁰ The Incarnation saves the world by filling it with form, with the light which is God, and so restoring it to fulness of being. Hence the Incarnation alone is the ground of the communion with God by virtue of which we can be. If Dionysios devotes little overt attention to the Cross, this is because he sees the passion and resurrection of Christ as part of a single process, the descent of God into non-being in order to create and save the world, to make it to be by his presence. Christ’s death and descent into hell do not stand apart by themselves but constitute the completion of his Incarnation, of his creative self-impartment.¹¹¹

Because Christ is God revealed, that is, God become creature, it is knowing the creature Christ that we know God. Thus the Incarnation is the fulfilment of the symbolic ontology whereby it is in knowing the world as his self-revelation that we know God. This is why the Orthodox faith is supremely the religion of the knowledge of God. God became man precisely in order to give us “gnosis:” the knowledge of himself that saves the world, that makes it to *be*.¹¹² The entire proclamation of the Gospel is summed up as the revelation of the unknowable God: “What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you.” It is no accident that our author chose to write under the name of the man converted by this sermon, the burden of which is just this revelation, the fact that the absolutely transcendent, inaccessible God, who “does not live in shrines made by man,” is also he “in whom we live, and move, and are.”¹¹³ This and innumerable other New Testament passages present the whole of the Gospel as nothing but the knowledge of God: the knowledge that saves, that gives being, that fills the earth as the rivers swell the sea. Is not the Orthodox faith the religion of light *par excellence*? Are not light and life for us one and the same? “In him was life and the life

¹¹⁰EH 3.3.11; 441B.

¹¹¹Cf. Balthasar, “Denys,” pp. 208-9: “So for [Dionysios] the mystery of the God-man, his humiliation, his suffering, death and descent is perfectly present, but it is contemplated in the context of God’s descent into the world as a whole. . . .”

¹¹²Cf. Schmemmann, “Sacrament and Symbol,” pp. 147-48: “The Christian, however, by definition ought to *know*. Does he not confess Christ to be both the *light* and the *life* of the world, the fulfilment of all knowledge and the redeemer of all existence? . . . [I]s he not indeed the Symbol of all symbols? Was it not said by Christ himself that the one who sees him sees the Father, . . . the one who believes in him has . . . eternal life?”

¹¹³Acts 17:23-34.

was the light of men."¹¹⁴ Conversely, throughout the tradition the ignorance of God is seen as darkness, death, non-being, hell. In view of this Father Wesche's objection to Dionysios' understanding of salvation in Christ as knowledge is indeed hard to comprehend.¹¹⁵ All man's religion is concerned with revelation, with the divine entering into the world. The Orthodox faith then is the fulfilment of all religion, because it proclaims the total revelation of God to man and the world. "We beheld his glory." "No one has ever seen God; the only-begotten Son . . . has made him known."¹¹⁶ "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen without eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands. . . . The life was made manifest, and we saw it. . . ."¹¹⁷ "He who has seen me has seen the Father."¹¹⁸

The sacraments, then, constitute the inclusion of all the world in the unique Incarnation. Father Wesche objects to Dionysios' doctrine of liturgy and sacrament on the ground that for Dionysios, he says, they "do not in themselves impart the life of God."¹¹⁹ Rather, like the Incarnation in his interpretation, they only "show" us, by way of non-realist symbolism, what really happens in a purely "spiritual" realm. For instance, "[T]he Eucharist . . . perceptibly shows to us the communion that is ours in Christ . . . but it does not itself impart this communion; it points beyond itself to the spiritual reality where this communion is realized."¹²⁰ Once again, this objection depends on the distinction between "showing" and "being" which Father Wesche sees in Dionysios. But there is no distinction. The sacraments do "show" the spiritual communion which they "symbolize," but the very essence of sacramental symbolism is that the material symbol or liturgical motion is that which it symbolizes.¹²¹

¹¹⁴John 1.4.

¹¹⁵Cf. Golitzin, "On the Other Hand," p. 318.

¹¹⁶John 1.14, 18.

¹¹⁷John 1.1-2.

¹¹⁸John 14.9. On the deep affinity between Dionysius and Johannine theology, cf. Balthasar, "Denys," p. 151.

¹¹⁹"Christological Doctrine," p. 61.

¹²⁰Ibid. p. 62.

¹²¹Cf. Balthasar, "Denys," p. 183: "The symbolism of the sacraments is naturally not to be construed in our modern attenuated sense: it is quite clear that the mysteries *continent et causant quae significant*." We should say, more simply, *sunt quae significant*.

Hence Dionysios clearly teaches the ontological reality of sacramental communion. "Each act of sacred initiation [i.e. each sacrament] gathers our fragmented lives into unifying deification, and by a deiform folding together of what is divided grants us communion and union with the One."¹²² There is no suggestion here that the sacraments merely "show" us this communion; Dionysios explicitly asserts that they themselves effect it. Again, the funeral rites not only "proclaim the resurrection as in an image," but also "give thearchic communions" to body and soul and "sanctify the whole man."¹²³ "Showing" and "effecting" invariably go together, because the very nature of reality is to be itself by revealing, by symbolizing God. And again, after describing death as a loss of form in both body and soul, Dionysios goes on to say that in the robing of the newly baptized person "the disordered is ordered and the formless receives form, being illumined by the whole luciform life."¹²⁴ Here is the ontological restoration of form, that is Being, to fallen man, presented as something that actually happens in the baptismal ritual. The initiate's being *symbolically* robed in white is his reception of the divine rays of being.¹²⁵

We find the same union of "showing" and "being" in Dionysios' account of the Holy Eucharist. "The reverend symbols [i.e. the precious Gifts] through which Christ is *meant and participated* (σημαίωεται καὶ μετέχεται) are placed on the altar. . . ."¹²⁶ Then, when they are distributed, the hierarch

by the union in the extreme of those who are divided with the things in which they come to be, renders the participants

¹²²EH 3.1, 424CD.

¹²³See above, n. 94.

¹²⁴EH 2.3.8, 404C.

¹²⁵Cf. Balthasar, "Denys," pp. 184-85: "In the Church's liturgy the Platonic dialectic of the images is to a certain extent stilled: . . . its destruction of the image for the sake of the pure concept and finally of mystical union. As little as the great, final image of God in the world, Jesus Christ, can be dissolved and thus rendered null and void . . . , as little are the divinely ordained images of the Church, its hierarchy and liturgy to be spiritualized away. . . . It belongs to the Areopagite to have caught up the whole spiritual energy of the Alexandrines and the Cappadocians in his work and at the same time to have banished definitively their tendency to threaten the Incarnation, the visible Church and the resurrection of the flesh." It is hard to believe that Balthasar and Father Wesche are referring to the same writer!

¹²⁶EH 3.3.9, 437C.

communicants of them. For he depicts in these things in a sensible way, bringing under sight Jesus Christ, our intelligible life, as in an image, who, from being hidden in the divine, by the complete and unconfused humanification for our sake . . . is made formed, and who being one by nature, proceeds without change to our division, and through this beneficent love for man calls the human race into participation in himself and his own goods, if we are united to his most divine life, likening ours to it as far as possible; and by this [likening] to truth we will be rendered communicants of God and of divine things.¹²⁷

We have quoted this passage at length because Luibheid's version, which Father Wesche cites to support his contention that in Dionysios the Eucharist merely "shows" the spiritual communion,¹²⁸ is exceptionally misleading. In that paraphrase, the hierarch, distributing the Gifts, "shows how" Christ became incarnate, granted us communion with himself, and so on. What Dionysios says, however, is not that he "shows how" or "shows that" Christ has done this, but rather that he "shows *Christ who*" has done this. (The construction is a series of participial clauses dependent on "Jesus Christ.") The eucharistic communion, therefore, is the "spiritual" divine activity itself in "material" or visible form. And Dionysios says not that the hierarch "makes clear that which gives life to our mind," as in Luibheid's version, but that he shows Christ who is "our intelligible Life (τὴν νοητὴν ἡμῶν . . . ζωὴν)." We have seen what this means: not that Christ gives life to our minds as opposed to our bodies, but that he is the intelligible form life itself by participation in which we are made alive.¹²⁹ This life, then, is what we receive in receiving the Eucharist.

Thus it is in the liturgy and sacraments that the intrinsically symbolic nature of the world, and therefore its very being, is realized. In liturgical ritual the world receives the form, the divine light, whereby it is truly itself, so that it reveals God to us and enables us

¹²⁷EH 3.3.13, 444C.

¹²⁸"Christological Doctrine," p. 63.

¹²⁹The allusion is not primarily to John 14.6 but to Colossians 3:4. The addition of "intelligible," as when Christ is called the "intelligible Sun" (see above, n. 68) amplifies but does not change the meaning of the scriptural text.

to participate in him.¹³⁰ And therefore the Eucharist, the sacrament of sacraments,¹³¹ as the supreme manifestation and symbol of God, is both the source and the fulfilment of the entire iconic and symbolic nature of the world: "The rite of the divine synaxis, having a single and simple and gathered-together principle, *is multiplied in love for man into the sacred variety of the symbols, and embraces even all the thearchic iconography*, but uniformly from those things again gathers into its own singularity, and makes one those who are sacredly led up to it."¹³² Because Dionysios teaches a cosmic sacramentality grounded and fulfilled in the Incarnation, in the Eucharist, his doctrine is as far as could be from the western understanding of sacrament as, in Father Schmemmann's words, "a drop of reality in a sea of symbols,"¹³³ a discontinuous exception to the fundamental principle of being. Rather, the symbolic nature of all the world, and thus the existence of the world itself, flows out from the supreme symbol, the holy Eucharist, God incarnate, first to the lesser symbols in the Church, the other sacraments, the holy icons, oil, incense, and then to all creation.¹³⁴ The Eucharist includes all the cosmos in itself as the perfect theophany, the Incarnation of God, so that all creation becomes itself by becoming, as it was made to be, symbolic and eucharistic.

Because the sacraments are ontologically effective by being symbolic, it is true, as Father Wesche says, that what they give us is knowledge. But again it is knowledge not *about* God but *of* God, the knowledge which is communion with God and which grounds our being.¹³⁵ "O taste and see that the Lord is good!"¹³⁶ To eat God is

¹³⁰Cf. above, and *EH* 1.3, 376A.

¹³¹*EH* 3.1, 424C.

¹³²*EH* 3.3.3, 429A.

¹³³"Sacrament and Symbol," p. 150.

¹³⁴Cf. Balthasar, "Denys," pp. 180-81: "[T]here is no question with Denys of 'demythologizing' Scripture or the Church in order to contemplate God more purely in nature, nor of devaluing the images of nature in favor of Scripture and the Church . . . because the Bible and the sacramental order depend on the images drawn from creation, for example on the symbolic power of water, or bread and wine, light and oil, used in the administration of the sacraments."

¹³⁵Cf. Semmelroth, "Erlösung und Erlöser," p. 379: "Gewiss ist nach dem Areopagiten das Sakramentsmysterium und die Liturgie συμβολική διδασκαλία, also Appell an die Erkenntnis dessen, der die Mysterien mitfeiert. Aber Erkenntnisgemeinschaft ist bei Ps.-Dionysius . . . Seinsgemeinschaft. Diese Didaskalia . . . bringt in ontischen Kontakt mit dem sein Heilsgeheimnis vollziehenden Christus. . . ."

¹³⁶Psalm 34.8.

to know him, to experience him, to take him into ourselves as our sustenance, our true bread, our being, life, and salvation. Food and light, life and knowledge, are all one. " 'Taste,' say the Scriptures, 'and see!' For by the sacred initiation of the divine things the initiates will recognize their great gifts of the grace of them, and being all-sacredly initiated into their most divine height and majesty in participation they will eucharistically praise the super-heavenly beneficence of the thearchy."¹³⁷ It is here in the liturgy that sense-perception is fulfilled as communion with God: "The symbolic composition of the ointment, as in the formation of what is unformed, represents to us Jesus himself as being the rich source of the divine fragrances. . . ."¹³⁸ To taste, to see, to touch, to smell Christ our God-made-manifest: this is the eternal life that we have in the sacraments. What we receive in them is eatable, drinkable knowledge, knowledge that we can breathe and bathe in, the "intelligible food"¹³⁹ that nourishes our true being. In the sensible sacraments we partake of the intelligible divine activities, the uncreated light, and so are and live. The entire purpose of the sacraments, as of the Incarnation, is nothing but to reveal God, to give us knowledge, experience, of God in this sense. What could be more authentically "primitive Christian" than to refer to baptism as "illumination"? In receiving the sacraments through our bodily senses and actions we know God and so have eternal life: "When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened and they *recognized* him. . . . He was *known* to them in the breaking of the bread."¹⁴⁰

Hierarchy

This outline of Dionysios' ontology, in which all things are in immediate communion with God who remains incommunicable, may appear to leave no place for the doctrine of hierarchy, in which angels are "higher" than man, clergy than laity, monks than those in the world, and so on. Since this so-called "rigidity" or "immutability" of the hierarchies is perhaps the accusation most persistently brought

¹³⁷ EH 3.3.15, 445C.

¹³⁸ EH 4.3.4, 480A.

¹³⁹ EH 4.3.4, 480A.

¹⁴⁰ Luke 24.30-31, 35.

against Dionysios,¹⁴¹ at least among the Orthodox, the issue plainly calls for further examination. Father Wesche's objection is that "gnosis, which is the content of salvation and communion, is mediated by Christ through the hierarchies so that the hierarchies stand between God and the individual."¹⁴² The higher orders are nearer to God because they have more immediate gnosis, or contemplative understanding of the intelligible "meaning" of liturgical symbolism.¹⁴³ This is what constitutes the "rigidity" of the hierarchies: "Dionysios cannot offer gnosis in equal measure to all who are in the Church, for the higher hierarchies will always possess the higher gnosis, and therefore will always be closer to God than the laity."¹⁴⁴ To respond to this objection a more subtle understanding of Dionysios' entire doctrine of hierarchy is needed.

How can we reconcile the doctrine of hierarchical mediation of saving communion, at once being and knowledge, with the claim that all beings, insofar as they are beings, are and must be in direct communion with God, and that this communion is deification? The answer is that the entire distinction between "direct" and mediated" communion is another false dichotomy. The direct ontological communion with God is not distinct from some other form of communion which is hierarchically mediated, but rather takes place in, through, and because of the hierarchies. Every creature is, that is, participates directly in God, precisely by occupying and insofar as it occupies its own proper position in the cosmic hierarchy. "The purpose of hierarchy, then, is likeness and union with God as far as possible . . . making its members divine images, clear and spotless mirrors, receptive of the original light and thearchic ray . . .," that is, receptive of being. Hence it is by fulfilling its hierarchical role that each creature realizes its existence by being the symbol and manifestation of God: "Perfection for each of those appointed in hierarchy is to be led up according to its proper analogy by the imitation of God . . . and to show the divine activity revealed in itself as far as possible."¹⁴⁵ As

¹⁴¹By, for instance, Father Meyendorff, who accepts the doctrine of the *Divine Names* but rejects the hierarchies for this reason. See his *Christ in Eastern Christian Thought* (Washington and Cleveland, 1969), pp. 80-83.

¹⁴²"Christological Doctrine," p. 64.

¹⁴³Ibid. pp. 55-56, and esp. 59.

¹⁴⁴"Christological Doctrine," p. 60.

¹⁴⁵CH3.2, 165B.

Lossky has shown, this understanding of hierarchical order as the ground of being is the entire meaning of the doctrine of "analogy" in Dionysios: each creature has being in its own proper way, or "analogically," according to its place in the cosmic hierarchy.¹⁴⁶ Thus far from being "rigid," the hierarchies are supremely dynamic, because the more thoroughly "hierarchical" a being is, the more perfectly it performs its appointed task within the hierarchical structure of creation, the more fully it participates directly in God.¹⁴⁷ "The revelatory order of principalities, archangels, and angels . . . is set over the human hierarchies, so that the ascent and return to God, and communion and union, and indeed the procession beneficently given by God to all the hierarchies might be in order."¹⁴⁸

Dionysios explicitly defends the principle of hierarchy against the (very modern) objection that it is unjust to the lower levels, by showing that each thing has its own perfection by being in its proper position:

The divine Righteousness orders all things, and sets their bounds, and preserves all unmixed and unconfused with all, and gives to all beings what is appropriate to each. . . . And . . . those who rail against the divine Righteousness do not realize that they are condemned for their manifest unrighteousness, for they say that immorality ought to be in mortal things, and what is complete in the incomplete . . . and identity

¹⁴⁶On this see Lossky, "La notion des 'analogies' chez Denys le Pseudo-Aréopagite," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge* 5 (1930), pp. 288ff, esp. p. 292: "[L]'analogie . . . signifie la capacité proportionnelle des créatures à participer aux vertus créatrices de Dieu, qui leur confèrent leur être et toutes leurs perfections. C'est l'analogie qui est le pivot de toute hiérarchie. . . . La hiérarchie, donc, est impossible sans l'analogie. . . . D'est la capacité différente des créatures à participer aux vertus divines qui définit le degré de chaque être, en lui assignant son ordre dans la hiérarchie universelle."

¹⁴⁷Cf. Semmelroth, *Erlösung und Erlöser*, p. 371: "Emporstreben und verharren in der analogie, die bestimmt ist, ist das nicht ein unlösbar Widerspruch? Für Ps.-Dionysius nicht. Hier werden wir wiederum zu der Gefährdung der Einheit und Harmonie des hierarchisch geordneten geschöpflichen Seins geführt. . . . [E]ben dieses ἀνατένθειν, der gebannte Blick nach oben, die Bewahrung der Analogie und damit der Einheit bedeutet. Emporstreben und Analogie-Bewahren hat Ps.-Dionysius selbst in einem gesehen, wenn er sagt, dass die Geschöpfe 'emporgeführt werden zu der ihnen gebührenden heiligen Analogie.'"

¹⁴⁸CH9.2, 260AB.

in differing things, and perfect power in the weak . . . and altogether they turn everything backwards (τὰ ἄλλων ἄλλοις ἀποδιδῶσι). But . . . the divine Righteousness in this is really true righteousness, because it assigns to all things what is proper to each according to the worth¹⁴⁹ of each being, and preserves the nature of each in its proper order and power.¹⁵⁰

Moreover, because being, goodness, deification, consists in fulfilling one's appointed place, to fall is to leave that place, to abandon one's proper position in the hierarchy, and therefore move toward non-being. Thus the demons are evil not in themselves but "by the deficiency of their order according to nature" or "by the lack of the angelic goods," i.e. the perfections proper to angels. "By privation, and flight, and fall from the goods appropriate to them, they are said to be evil, and they are evil insofar as they are not."¹⁵¹

Furthermore, since every being at every level is in direct communion with God, God is not contained within the cosmic hierarchy as its peak. God is not a being. If he were, he would not be transcendent but would be a member of the cosmos, and only the highest ranks of angels would have direct contact with him. Rather, because he grounds and wholly penetrates the entire hierarchy from top to bottom directly, he also stands outside and transcends the whole. "For since the goodness of the Godhead which is beyond all things extends from the highest and most venerable essences to the last, and is still above all, the higher do not outstrip Its excellence nor do the lower go beyond Its containment. . . ."¹⁵² God is not a "something," a being however exalted, but "all things in all things and nothing in any." Thus we need not fear being cut off from immediate communion with him by intervening ranks, as though he were merely

¹⁴⁹The term ἀξία in Dionysios means not "merit" in the sense of something acquired by the creature, but rather "proper position" or "nature," as established by God in creating it, so that it is virtually synonymous with "analogy" as defined above, n. 146.

¹⁵⁰*DN* VIII.7, 896AB; cf. also *DN* 8.9, 897BC, where Dionysios defends the divine "inequality" in a similar way: "For if one understands inequality, the differences in all of all from all, Righteousness is conservative of this too, lest, by confusing, all things should become mixed up with all things in a muddle; but it preserves all beings according to each form, in which it is appropriate for each thing to be."

¹⁵¹*DN* 4.23, 724D-25C; cf. 4.26, 728C; 4.34, 733C.

¹⁵²*DN* 4.4, 697C.

the highest link in the great chain of being.¹⁵³ In that he is transcendent, "nothing in any," the seraphim are as infinitely far from him as the dust; and in that he is immanent, "all things in all things," the dust, if it but fulfill its appointed role as dust, partakes of him no less than the seraphim.

What then is the meaning of the hierarchical gradations whereby, it seems, the angels have "direct" knowledge of God while men have only "mediated" knowledge and communion, whereby clerics are "closer" to God than the laity? To understand this we must grasp better the real nature of the "superiority" and "inferiority" in the grades. Because creation is theophany, the created hierarchy is grounded in the hierarchy of the uncreated divine activities. "Since *the hieratic orders are icons of the divine activities*, revealing in themselves the ordered illuminations of the well-adorned and unconfused order of the divine activities . . . they are ordered in hierarchical distinctions. . . . The hierarchy of the divine icons divides itself into distinct orders and powers, visibly revealing the thearchic activities. . . ."¹⁵⁴ Dionysios explains the hierarchy of divine activities in *DN* 5 on the basis of degrees of inclusion: being is higher than life, for instance, because it "extends farther," including all beings. life extends only to living things, which participate "first" in being and then in life. Likewise life is higher than wisdom, in which only intelligent living beings participate, and so on.¹⁵⁵ This doctrine of

¹⁵³In the medieval west, God came to be regarded in just this way, not as the being of all things (*esse commune, forma omnium, esse formale omnium*) and beyond being, but as *a* being, an existing thing, "the Supreme Being." By regarding God as a being, a *res existens*, one of the things that are, the west lost sight at once of both the divine transcendence (nothing in any) and the divine immanence (all in all). Thus, contrary to Father Wesche's claim ("Christological Doctrine," p. 53-54, n. 3), the true influence and continuation of Dionysios' thought is to be found in the Byzantine tradition, especially in Saints Maximos and Gregory Palamas, not in medieval western philosophy, which used his works extensively but drastically changed his fundamental outlook. This departure from Dionysian apophaticism and cosmic sacramentalism lies at the root of most of the west's vagaries in all areas of theology and, as Father Schmemmann has so clearly shown ("Worship" and "Sacrament," *passim*), leads inevitably to secularism.

¹⁵⁴*EH* 5.1.7, 508C-9A; cf. Semmelroth, "Gottes ausstrahlendes Licht," p. 493: "Es ist nicht ein unmerklicher Übergang vom Hellen zum Dunklen wie beim Licht der Sonne, sondern das göttliche Licht strahlt aus in einer mannigfaltigen Schöpfung. . . . Es ist die Ordnung der Hierarchie, die bis in ihre letzten Ausläufer eine heilige Ordnung ist, weil alle ihre Stufen überstrahlt sind vom übergöttlichen, schöpferischen Lichte."

¹⁵⁵*DN* 5.2-3, 5, 816C-17B, 820A-C.

uncreated hierarchy means that all the divine activities, such as purification, etc., are nothing but further specifications of being, and that being, as the all-embracing activity of God, includes all the more specific activities in itself.¹⁵⁶ This is why, as we have seen, all the divine gifts given in the sacraments are nothing but the fulness of being.

In consequence, the created hierarchies are governed by what we may call the law of inclusion and manifestation. Whatever possesses a more specific activity also necessarily possesses all the more general ones. Therefore the higher level, in every case, is not exempt from but rather surpasses and includes the proper perfections of the lower levels, and this alone is the reason for its superiority. If being is above life and life is above wisdom, why are not inanimate objects higher than living things and animals higher than intelligent beings? They would be, Dionysios explains, "if one supposes intellectual beings are not beings and living things."

But since the divine minds also are [in a way] above other beings, and live [in a way above other living things, and are intelligent and know [in a way above sense and reason . . . they are nearer to the Good, participating in It in a eminent manner (περισσῶς), and receive from It *more* and *greater* gifts; likewise rational beings excel sensitive ones, having more by the eminence of reason, and the latter [excel other living things] by sense-perception, and [living things excel mere beings] by life. And . . . the things which participate more in the one and infinitely-giving God are closer to him and more divine than the rest.¹⁵⁷

If the angels are "nearer" to God, it is because, having not *merely* intellection but intellection *as well as* life and being, the "participate in him in a multiplicity of ways."¹⁵⁸ This principle determines all hierarchies. Among the angels, "We say that in every rank the higher orders have also the illuminations and powers of the subordinate ranks, but the later do not participate in those of the superior."¹⁵⁹ Likewise

¹⁵⁶ DN 5.5-7, 821C.

¹⁵⁷ DN 5.3, 817AB; cf. CH 4.1, 177CD.

¹⁵⁸ CH 4.1, 177D.

¹⁵⁹ CH 5. 196BC.

in the ecclesiastical hierarchy, bishops have the powers of priests and deacons as well, and priests have those of deacons. "The more divine powers, along with their own, also know the sacred understandings set below their own perfection."¹⁶⁰ And this alone is why bishops are the highest rank in the Church: "Therefore the divine order of the hierarchs is the first of the orders which see God, but it is also the highest and the last, for in it are perfected and fulfilled all the ordering of our hierarchy."¹⁶¹

But further, because all the activities of the lower orders are contained in the higher, the lower do not simply lack, but rather receive and manifest the higher activities in a lesser way. Just as being alive is a higher way of merely being, so merely being may be described as a lower way of being alive. Among the angels, "We say that the later [orders] lack the whole and superior power of the senior ranks; for they participate in it partially and analogously, by the one harmonious and binding communion of all . . . *Just as the first have in an eminent way the holy properties of the lower, so the later have those of the earlier, not in the same way but in a lesser way.*"¹⁶² Likewise, in the ecclesiastical hierarchy, all sacramental activity, for instance that of a priest celebrating the Eucharist, is merely the manifestation and presence of the bishop's activity: "Every hierarchy . . . has one and the same activity through all the hierarchy work: the hierarchy himself. . . ."¹⁶³ Therefore "the power of the hierarchic order pervades all the sacred totalities, and through all the sacred orders effects the mysteries of its own hierarchy."¹⁶⁴ Because hierarchy represents not superiority and exclusion on one side, inferiority and deficiency on the other, but rather eminence and inclusion on one side, manifestation and possession on the other, it is one and the same activity that is present throughout all the hierarchies, according to the appropriate analogy of each.¹⁶⁵ Hierarchical mediation is

¹⁶⁰EH 5.1.7, 508C.

¹⁶¹EH 5.1.5, 505A. This is the traditional doctrine that "the church is in the bishop."

¹⁶²CH 12.2, 292C-93A.

¹⁶³EH 1.2, 372CD.

¹⁶⁴EH 5.1.5, 505B. In the continuation of this passage, Dionysios points to the priest's need for the antimens, chrism, and his own ordination to confirm the orthodox doctrine that it is only the bishop's sacramental activity that is present even when one of the sacraments is being celebrated by a priest.

¹⁶⁵Cf. CH 10.2, 285A.

thus the principle, not of the exclusion of the lower levels from direct participation in God, but rather of the direct communion of all things with him and the intercommunion of all creatures with one another. "All things are in all things, but in the way proper to each" is a favorite principle of Neoplatonism,¹⁶⁶ which surely we, with Dionysios,¹⁶⁷ may accept as an expression of the unconfused unity of all things through the whole presence of God in all.

We may now apply this law to the question of the hierarchy of modes of knowledge. On the one hand, the angels, as pure minds, do not lack the knowledge of sensible beings, but possess it eminently in their own intellectual power. "The Scriptures say that the angels know the things on earth, knowing them not by sense-perception, although they are sensible things, but by the proper power and nature of the deiform mind."¹⁶⁸ On the other hand, as we have seen, our discursive reason is a manifestation of intellection at a lower level and our sense-perception is an "echo of wisdom," and they are therefore themselves modes of direct knowledge and communion with God. Whenever a lower order receives illumination (being/knowledge) through the mediation of a higher, it participates directly in God himself: "God is by nature and truly and properly the source of illumination to all those who are illumined, as the essence of light and the cause of being itself and of seeing. But by placement and in a god-imitating way that which is higher in part [is the source] to each thing after, in that the divine lights are derived to the latter through it. . . . Wherefore they refer every sacred and God-imitating activity to God, as cause, but to the first deiform minds as the first effectors and teachers of divine things."¹⁶⁹ This is the doctrine of synergy, in which the "mediating" act of the creature is also the "direct" act of God. "Perfection for each of those appointed in hierarchy to be led up according to its proper analogy to the imitation of God, and . . . to become a co-worker (συνεργόν) of God, and to *show the divine activity revealed in itself*. . . . As, since the order of hierarchy is that some are purified and others purify, some are illumined and others illumine, some are perfected and other perfect, the imitation of God

¹⁶⁶See e.g. Proklos, *The Elements of Theology*, ed. and tr. E. R. Dodds, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1963), prop. 103, p. 92; cf. Dodds' commentary on this passage, p. 254.

¹⁶⁷See below, n. 181.

¹⁶⁸DN 7.2, 869C.

¹⁶⁹CH 13.3, 301D-304A.

is adapted to each in a certain mode.”¹⁷⁰ Once again we find that it is by hierarchy, by each creature giving and receiving “mediation” as is proper to it, that all “imitate” or participate in God.¹⁷¹

According to Father Wesche, because the liturgy in Dionysios merely “shows” what God does but is not itself the divine activity, “the value of the sacraments depends chiefly upon the observer’s capacity for spiritual contemplation,” and “to receive the full benefit of the Church’s sacraments one must possess the necessary intellectual qualities for spiritual contemplation.”¹⁷² The passages we have just seen show, however, that because of the sacramental principle of synergy the liturgical acts performed by the hierarch *are* the deifying work of God in creation. The celebrant’s baptismal robing of the initiate *is* God’s granting him divine illumination; the hierarch’s distribution of the Eucharist *is* God’s incarnational self-impartment to the world, and so on.¹⁷³ The “noetic contemplation” made possible by liturgy and sacrament is not merely a discursive understanding of what they “mean,” available only to an ordained elite, but an ontological communion with God offered in infinite measure to all participants. The principal passage that Father Wesche cites to support his claim that the higher orders in the Church have greater communion because they are more “contemplative” again suffers from persistent mistranslation. Dionysios does not say, as in Luiheid’s version, that the members of each order receive communion “to the extent that is possible for them,” “so far as they can,” “to the extent of their abilities.” He says that each order receives it *ἀναλογῶς* and *αὐτῇν*, that is, “in the way proper to it.”¹⁷⁴ This again is the doctrine of hierarchical analogy, in which each level receives the *whole* divine activity in its own proper mode. We must always remember that “noetic contemplation,” so prominent in Dionysios’ account of

¹⁷⁰CH 3.2, 165BC.

¹⁷¹Cf. Semmelroth, “Erlösung und Erlöser,” p. 370: “Die Einheit bei aller Vielheit der Welt ist nur möglich, wenn jedes Einzelgeschöpf seinen ihm bestimmten Platz inne hat und ihn nicht verliert.”

¹⁷²“Christological Doctrine,” p. 73.

¹⁷³Cf. Balthasar, “Denys,” p. 175: “But if the unity of the sacrament and the ‘in-sight of purified spirit’ is the very meaning of the liturgical enactment, then it becomes clear why Denys will have nothing to do with an isolated consideration and treatment of *opus operatum*: The moral enactment is not a second act alongside the sacramental which merely occasions it, it must be one with it or it is nothing at all.”

¹⁷⁴EH 6.1.1-3, 532B-D; Luiheid, pp. 244-45.

the liturgy, does not do away with but assumes and transfigures sense-perception, while sense-perception manifests noesis at a lower level. Contemplation is the saving knowledge that includes the whole man, and is therefore wholly present in an analogous way at every level.¹⁷⁵

Thus, because the hierarchical structure of the Church is the basis for the direct analogous communion of all with God, it is not "rigid" but manifests the great liturgical dance of the cosmos around God,¹⁷⁶ in which each being glorifies God and rushes ever deeper into him by ever more perfectly becoming what it is, fulfilling its own hierarchical role. Evil occurs when the dance, the cosmic liturgy, is disrupted because a dancer gets out of step, assuming the role of a being above or below it. This is not hierarchy as understood in the modern west, where the higher dominate the lower and lower thirst for "empowerment." "It shall not be so among you."¹⁷⁷ This is a hierarchy of love, in which the higher providentially serves the lower and lower in response follows the higher. Therefore all hierarchical order is the expression of love.¹⁷⁸ On the one hand, it is the love of creation for God: "By all things, then, the beautiful and the good is desired and beloved and cherished; and on account of It and for Its sake, the lower love the higher reverbatively, and those of equal order their equal communally, and the higher the lower providentially, and each thing itself preservingly, and all things by desiring the beautiful and the good do and will whatever they do and will."¹⁷⁹ And on the other hand it is the love of God for creation: the divine name Love is that of "a unifying an preserving power, excellently blending in the beautiful and good, pre-existing through the beautiful and good,

¹⁷⁵Indeed, if Dionysios believes that the value of the sacraments depends on the degree to which the communicant understands their "meaning," it is hard to see why he goes out of his way to discuss and defend infant baptism and communion. "The hierarch imparts the sacred symbols to the child so that he may be nourished in them, and have no other life save that which always contemplates the divine things, and becomes a communicant of them in sacred progressions. . . ." *EH* 7.3.11, 568C. The "noetic contemplation" made possible in the sacraments is open even to children through their bodily senses.

¹⁷⁶Cf. Balthasar, "Denys," p. 172: "Because God is in all things and above all things, being and knowing can only be a festival and a 'dance.' . . ."

¹⁷⁷Matthew 20.26.

¹⁷⁸Cf. *Ibid.* p. 200: "Therefore the final meaning of the hierarchies is not, in a Christian context, designated as the knowledge of God or even the representation of God, but love: as 'the perpetual love for God' . . . but also, in the game of give-and-take between the creatures, in imitation of God in mutual love."

¹⁷⁹*DN* 4.10, 708A.

and given out from the beautiful and good through the beautiful and good, and binding those of equal order in communal mutuality, moving the first in providence for the lower, and establishing the lower in return to the higher."¹⁸⁰ The essence of hierarchy is the love of God which holds all creation in being:

This one good and beautiful is uniquely the cause of all the many good and beautiful things. From this are all the essential existences of beings, the unions, the distinctions, the identities, the differences, the likenesses, the unlikenesses, the communions of opposites, the non-confusion of united things, the providences of the higher, the interchanges of equals, the returns of the lower, the preserving and immutable abidings and foundations of all things themselves; and again the communions of all things in all things in the way proper to each, and the adaptations, and the unconfused friendships, and the harmony of all, the blendings in all, and the inseparable connections of beings, the unceasing successions of what comes to be, all rests and motions of minds, souls, and bodies. For he is rest and motion to all, who is above all rest and all motion, establishing each in its own logos, and moving each in its proper motion.¹⁸¹

The entire content of hierarchy in Dionysios is divine love.

Anyone who has worshipped in a traditionally adorned Orthodox church knows that hierarchy is neither an alien imposition nor a merely administrative convenience for the Church on earth, but constitutes the very essence of the Church as the deified cosmos, the Body of Christ. The "ordinary" saints depicted in the lower orders do not resentfully feel themselves cut off from Christ Pantokrator in the dome by the intervening ranks of apostles, angels, and the Theotokos. There is no envy here. Rather the entire Church constitutes the Body, the Temple in which God dwells wholly at every level, in virtue of its hierarchical structure.¹⁸² The very fact that this is the correct icono-

¹⁸⁰DN 4.12, 709CD.

¹⁸¹DN 4.7, 704BC.

¹⁸²Cf. Balthasar, "Denys," p. 166: "The objective, hierarchical *taxis* . . . is the form of God's self-manifestation: the Church is the heart of the world and the earthly representation of the heavenly court. . . ."

graphic program for a church shows that the Dionysian doctrine of cosmic and ecclesiastical hierarchy is not only consistent with but essential to holy tradition. In the discomfort which some feel with this doctrine, we cannot help but see a symptom of the wholly unorthodox democratic, egalitarian, and individualist views which pervade the modern world. The Orthodox doctrine of hierarchy, on the other hand, is magnificently expressed by C. S. Lewis in the (very Dionysian) mystical ecstasy at the conclusion of his *Perelandra*:

All is righteousness and there is no equality. Not as when stones lie side by side, but as when stones support and are supported in an arch, such is his order; rule and obedience, begetting and bearing, heat glancing down, life growing up. . . .

The Dust is at the centre. The Worlds are at the centre. The beasts are at the centre. . . . The race that sinned is there. . . . There [angels] are there also.

Where [God] is, there is the centre. He is in every place. Not some of him in one place and some in another, but in each place the whole [God]. . . . There is no way out of the centre save into the [Evil] Will which casts itself into the Nowhere. . . .

In the plan of the Great Dance plans without number interlock. . . . Thus each is equally at the centre and none are there by being equals, but some by giving place and some by receiving it, the small things by their smallness and the great by their greatness, and all the patterns linked and looped together by the unions of a kneeling with a sceptred love. . . .

He has immeasurable use for each thing that is made, that his love and splendour may flow forth like a strong river which has need of a great watercourse and fills alike the deep pools and the little crannies, that are filled equally and remain unequal. . . .¹⁸³

Saint Dionysios' doctrines of creation, of knowledge, of sin and salvation, of Incarnation, of liturgy and sacrament, of hierarchy, them, far from being merely "gnostic," are dazzlingly ontological—indeed blindingly so, to judge from the interpretation that has been placed upon them. His entire work, from beginning to end, is a celebration of the glory of *Being* as the revelation of God. In this he is the supreme

¹⁸³(New York, 1944), pp. 214-17.

master of the Orthodox vision of the world, joining all these aspects of the faith in a single coherent structure. Dionysios represents precisely those doctrines which are most typical of Orthodoxy in distinction from the west: creation as theophany; grace as continuous with nature; knowledge as union of knower and known; Incarnation and sacrament as fulfilment, not exception or addition; liturgy as the realization of the cosmos; mysticism as ontological union rather than psychological condition; sin as corruption and loss of being, not legalistic transgression; atonement as physical-ontological assumption, not justification or juridical satisfaction;¹⁸⁴ hierarchy as service and love, not oppression and envy. Protestantism, then, is right to reject Dionysios as fundamentally opposed to its perverted notion of Christianity: as opposed as light is to darkness, as truth is to error. But there can be no place for such a rejection in the true Church, the Church of the word made flesh and the vision of the invisible God, which constitute the whole of Dionysios' teaching.

¹⁸⁴The only points on which Semmelroth, otherwise so favorable, objects to Dionysios are precisely his doctrines of nature and grace and of sin and redemption. These are emphatically exceptions that prove the rule, for as Semmelroth himself notes Dionysios is here in agreement with the other Greek Fathers and his doctrine is problematic only from a later western point of view. "Die Unterschiedslosigkeit zwischen natürlichem and übernatürlichem Zustand, in der ganzen griechischen Patristik der schwache Punkt [!], ist bei Dionysius besonders eigentümlich" ("Erlösung und Erlöser," p. 372). And again, "Sünde, Abfall von der gottbestimmten Analogie [ist] nicht so sehr personale Beleidigung Gottes, sondern Störung der Ordnung der hierarchisch gebauten Welt. . . . So mag es kommen, dass der Gedanke einer Genugtuungsleistung vor dem persönlich beleidigten Gott, der im heutigen Glaubensbewusstsein die Mitte allen Erlösungswirkens ausmacht [!], nur sehr am Rande des ps.-areopagitischen Bewusstseins liegt" (Ibid. pp. 374-75). To which all Orthodox may heartily reply, "Thanks be to God!"

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The Challenge of Contextual Theologies

EMMANUEL CLAPSIS

ORTHODOX THEOLOGIANS, AS A GROUP, DO NOT CONSTITUTE A GHETTO separate from the theologians of divided Christendom. As a result of its involvement in the ecumenical movement and because of the essential nature of Orthodox theology as a witness to the Catholicity of Christian truth, Orthodox theology is intrinsically committed to an ongoing dialogue with all those seeking unity in Christ.¹ In the process, divided Christians, as well as the world at large, challenge Orthodoxy to articulate, with humility, the significance of Christian Truth for concrete life situations that do not conform with the basic principles of the coming reality of God's Kingdom.² In such situations, generalities are always evasive concerning our responsibility to act decisively against "the world" in solidarity with those who have been dehumanized by its oppressive and sinful forces.

In the ecumenical scene we witness the emergence of a variety of theologies which struggle to contextualize Christian theology in such a manner as to become *an effective* transfigurative and liberative power in a world that cries out for liberation from violence, injustice, and hatred.³ We can attribute the origins of these theologies to a

¹ Oliver Clement, "The Orthodox Church and Her Service to Unity," *Orthodoxy and Freedom*, ed. A. J. Phillippou (Oxford, 1973); Nikos Nissiotis, "The Witness and the Service of Eastern Orthodoxy to the One Undivided Church," *Ecumenical Review* 14 (1962) 19-202; Nikos Matsoukas, *Oikoumenike kinese, historia kai theologia* (Thessalonike, 1986); and Vasil T. Istavridis, *Historia tes oikoumenikes kineseos* (Thessalonike, 1986).

² *The Orthodox Approach to Diakonia: Consultation on Church and Service—Orthodox Academy of Crete, November 20-25, 1978* (Geneva, 1980); and *Just Development for Fullness of Life, A Responsible Christian Participation—WCC/CCPD—Orthodox Consultation in Kiev, USSR, 22-30 June 1987* (Geneva, 1982).

³ Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York, 1973); *The Power of*

reaction against the exaggerated intellectualism of "traditional" Christian academic theology which contributed to an ever-increasing gulf between "saying" and "doing" theology.⁴ In an attempt to unite theology and ethics, contextual theologies advocate that theology should be "done" as a process of thought and action in relation to human realities and the created cosmos. Theology should not only help us to understand the world, but to transform it according to the basic principles of God's kingdom.

In the process of meaningfully relating the Gospel to the historical life experience of people and to the extent that their consciousness is formed and developed by the culture in which they live, theology must express its message through the language, symbols, fears, and hopes of that particular culture in which it finds itself. This means that theology, in its pastoral expressions, is to a certain degree culturally conditioned, and therefore, local.⁵ Consequently, it is very possible for theology to reflect the cultural values of a given society rather than the truth of the Gospel. For this reason, contextual theologies

the Poor in History: Selected Writings, esp. pp. 36-74; "Liberation Praxis and Christian Faith," and "Theology from the Underside of History," pp. 169-221 (New York, 1983); James Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power* (New York, 1969); Idem., *God of the Oppressed* (New York, 1955); Grayrand Wilmore and James Cone, eds., *Black Theology: A Documentary History 1969-1979* (New York, 1979); Kofi Apiah-Kubi and Sergio Torres, eds., *African Theology Enroute* (New York, 1979); Noel Leo Erskine, *Decolonizing Theology: A Caribbean Perspective* (New York, 1981); Elizabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York, 1983); Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology* (Boston, 1977); Carol Christ and Judith Christ, *Womanspirit Rising* (New York, 1979); and Carol Ochs, *Behind the Sex of God: Toward a New Consciousness Transcending Matriarchy* (Boston, 1977).

⁴ Juan Luis Segundo, *Liberation of Theology* (New York, 1976); Clodovis Boff, *Theology and Praxis—Epistemological Foundations* (New York, 1987).

⁵ Concerning the contextual and local nature of theology see: Robert J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (New York, 1986); Joseph Spae, "Missiology as Local Theology and Interreligious Encounter," *Missiology* 7 (1979) pp. 479-500; Klauspeter Blarer, "Kontextual Theologie als Ökumenisches Problem," *Theologische Zeitschrift* 36 (1980), pp. 220-32; Louis Lazbetak, "Signs of Progress in Contextual Theology," *Verbum SVD* 22 (1981) pp. 39-57; Krikor Hakeblian, "The Problem of Contextualization," *Missiology* 11 (1983) pp. 95-111; and A. O. Dyson, "Dogmatic or Contextual Theology," *Study Encounter* 8/3 (1972). For a critical Orthodox evaluation of contextual theologies see: Nikos A. Nissiotis, "Ecclesial Theology in Context," *Doing Theology Today*, ed. Cho An-Seng Song (Madras, 1976) pp. 101-24; idem; *Apologia tes Elpidos* (Athens, 1975); Demetrios Trakatellis, "Theology in Encounters: Risks and Visions," *The Greek Theological Review*, 32 (1987) 31-37; and John Meyendorff, "The Unity of the Church and the Unity of Mankind," *Living Tradition* (New York, 1978) pp. 129-48.

consistently give priority to the context of theology and not to theological content.⁶ They challenge us to become aware of the effects that the world has upon our theological enterprise. This influence is also pointed out by modern hermeneutics which insist that every text has a context which stands not merely outside the text to qualify it, but becomes a constitutive part of the text itself. Every statement arises from a particular life-context or situation that not only colors the formulation of the statement, but also becomes a constitutive part of the formulation itself.⁷ This is when people, when quoted, protest that they have been misunderstood and their words "have been taken out of context." If this is the case, it is then possible to argue that every theological statement is inextricably bound to a particular historical, socio-cultural, political, and psychological life-situation. Theology, therefore, is inevitably contextual. If such is accepted, it follows that one cannot speak of an abstract theology of universal and absolute validity, but only of a plurality of theologies in accordance with the diversity of human contexts. In addition, the relation of our ideas, theories, or theologies to the social matrix of life or to the life practice of the society of which we are part has been clearly shown by the sociology of knowledge.⁸ In other words, the sociology of knowledge strongly affirms that there exists a dialectical relationship between ideas and social reality, theory and praxis, and theological reflections and ecclesial-social life situation. All our thinking is conditioned by the social *a priori*. Hence, to speak of a theology which is "objective" and universally valid is almost impossible. It becomes clear that we must therefore speak of different theologies and as well theological types, models, and methods based on the diversity of human experience and sociocultural contexts.

This kind of pluralism has always been part of our world pluralism of religions, cultures, philosophies, and world-views. What is new today is the increasing awareness of our pluralistic situation due to

⁶Orthodox theologians here would make a significant differentiation between the almost exclusive dependence of theology, its tasks, method, and language of its possible "relevance" to the "needs" of modern man and its responsibility to relate to the culture in which it finds itself as the manifestation of the basic Christian concern for the world and its salvation. For it is one thing to depend on the world and quite another to relate to it. Thus, all genuine theology relates to the world by always being pastoral, missionary, and prophetic. Wherever it has lost its true dimensions, it has become a mere intellectual game justly ignored by the people of God. Alexander Schmemmann, "The Task of Orthodox Theology Today," *Church, World, Mission* (New York, 1979) p. 117.

⁷Josef Bleicher, *Contemporary Hermeneutics: Hermeneutics as Method, Philosophy and Critique* (London, 1980); Gary Shapiro and Alan Sica, eds. *Hermeneutics* (Amherst, 1984); and Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory* (Fort Worth, 1976).

⁸Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality* (New

the emergence of the phenomenon of the "global village," its acceptance as a result of the discovery of the limitations, the historicity of the human points of view, and the complexity of reality. Furthermore, there is not only an awareness of the fact of pluralism, but also an increasing multiplication of this phenomenon due to secularization, the break-up of absolute world-views, and the compartmentalization of specialized knowledge into various sciences to the extent that everyone today is theoretically free to choose his own world view, beliefs, value-systems, and life-style. Still, pluralism in theology should not serve as an excuse for relativism. Rather, it should be conceived as an invitation for a common dialogical search for the truth to which each member comes with an awareness of his contextual limitations, a willingness to converse with others, and, most importantly, with the accumulated wisdom of Christian tradition in an effort to grasp the catholicity of the Christian truth which cannot be exhaustively described or contained by any conceptual system of theological discourse.⁹

It is a fact, however, that the emerging local or contextual theologies seem so mutually exclusive and provincial that one may wonder whether Christianity is able to express the Gospel of Jesus Christ with a common language.¹⁰ Others may argue that Christianity never possessed a common or universal language by which the Gospel was communicated to others, but that Christianity, from its beginnings, addressed people with a variety of languages which reflected how the Gospel had related to the particular situation of those people whom it addressed. Yet even people who recognize diversity and plurality as a blessing would argue that contemporary pluralism in theology is not only a blessing but a problem, a shattering experience that may lead theology to privatism.¹¹

Pluralism in theology has the potential to breed theological *anomy*, since, in the spirit of pluralism, anything can be accepted as theology as long as it contains some reference to God, if employing selective use of church tradition and religious pietistic expression. Awareness of this problem has raised the issue of theological method to the center of current theological reflection in an attempt to determine what is

York, 1967); Werner Stark, *The Sociology of Knowledge* (London, 1958); K. Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (New York, 1936).

⁹David Tracy, *Plurality and Ambiguity: Hermeneutics, Religion, Hope* (New York, 1987), p. 98.

¹⁰Deane William Fernald, *Contemporary American Theologies* (New York, 1981) pp. 137-39.

¹¹This thesis is advanced by articles in the entire issue of *Concilium* entitled:

normative in Christian theology and to define, to the extent that it is possible, the limits of legitimate and tolerable diversity in Christian theological discourse.¹² Thus, efforts are made by systematic theologians to limit the impact of subjectivism upon theology by developing criteria of authentic theological discourse through which theology may overcome all dangers of privatization and ideological captivity without compromising either its faithfulness to the spirit of Christian Tradition or its responsibility to be existentially meaningful to our human situation.¹³ In this process it is essential for contemporary existentialism. The first because it leads to false objectification of God in metaphysical thought; the second, because it runs the risk of reducing the mystery of God just to its meaning for man.

It would be fair to insist that Orthodox theology has some extra ammunition against these dangers by its insistence that authentic theology should be a reflection of the ecclesial life of the faithful who are united, always through the Church, with God.¹⁴ Given the fact that the Spirit of God, the Paraclete, leads us "into all truth," and informs us "of things to come" (Jn 16.12-15), and unites us through Christ with God, we must affirm that Orthodox theology is intrin-

Different Theologies, Common Responsibility: Babel or Pentecost? eds. Claude Geffre, Gustavo Gutierrez, and Virgil Elizondo (Edinburgh, 1984); Margaret Miles, "Hermeneutics of Generosity and Suspicion: Pluralism and Theological Educations," *Theological Education*, 23 (1907) 34-52.

¹²This situation, from an Orthodox view, may be considered as a unique and distant problem of Western and Third World Christianity. However, any assessment of contemporary Orthodox theology will persuade us that Orthodox theologians in their theological writings have become more pluralistic, conflictive, and diverse than they have been in the past: Demetrios J. Constantelos, *Issues and Dialogues in the Orthodox Church Since World War II* (Brookline, 1987) pp. 55-66; Christos Yannaras, "Theology in Present-Day Greece," *St. Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly* 16 (1972) 200ff; John S. Romanides, "Critical Examination of the Applications of Theologies," in *Deuxième Congrès de Théologie Orthodoxe*, ed. Savas Agourides (Athens, 1978), pp. 431-41; and Panagiotis K. Chrestou, "Neohellenic Theology at the Crossroads," *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, 28 (1983) 39-54.

¹³David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (New York, 1981); Walter Kasper, *The Methods of Dogmatic Theology* (New York, 1969); Dermont A. Lane, *Foundations for a Social Theology: Praxis, Process and Salvation* (New York, 1984); Choan Seng Song, ed., *Doing Theology Today* (Madras, 1976); Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Theology and Philosophy of Sciences* (Philadelphia, 1976); Theodore W. Jennings, Jr., *Introduction to Theology: An Invitation to Reflection Upon the Christian Mythos* (Philadelphia, 1976); Clodovis Boff, *Theology and Praxis*; Juan Luis Segundo, *The Liberation of Theology*; and Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York, 1979).

¹⁴Some of the radical contextual theologies are so preoccupied with their own context—their own culture and milieu—that they neglect to place themselves within the ecclesial context. For the ecclesial context of all theology see: Nikos Nissiotis,

sically pneumatic, and therefore eschatological and ecclesial.¹⁵ The ultimate expression of this theology is doxological, since it reflects the human response of thanksgiving to the experience of God's gracious presence and salvific activity in the world.¹⁶ All Christian theologians would agree that doxology is the most noble and ultimate expression of theology. Nevertheless, once we recognize the historicity of the Christian insights of Christian truth and the manner by which we theologically evaluate the present situation of the world, disagreements arise and stubbornly persist, concerning the method by which we retrieve the normative insights of Christian classics. For this particular stage of theologizing, theologians would agree, with a degree of variety, that modern critical, historical, and literary exegetical methods may help theology liberate itself from the naive, simplistic, and arbitrary views about the past and present situation of the Christian faith. They would also recognize that the use of these methods plague theology with new problems, ambiguities, and complexities. Theologians, challenged by the findings of these methods, have become increasingly sensitive to the effects of the world upon the language, temperament, and issues that Christian theologians choose either to emphasize, ignore, or dispute in their writings. For example, Third World theologians, exercising what has been called a "hermeneutics of suspicion,"¹⁷ have accused continental theology of being insensitive to their cultural heritage and social conditions: Black theologians have discerned in the writings of white theologians a hidden racism as feminist theologians accuse male theologians of sexism. While these contextual theologies raise our sensitivity against the possible presence of racism, sexism, and even classism in our theologies, it is certain that if they continue to develop in isolation

"Ecclesial Theology in Context," in *Doing Theology Today*, and Geoffrey Wainwright, "Theology as Churchly Reflection," in *The Vocation of the Theologian*, ed. Theodore W. Jennings, Jr. (Philadelphia, 1983) pp. 9-24.

¹⁵For the nature of Orthodox Theology see: Constantine B. Skouteris, *He ennoia ton horon "theologein," "theologos," en te didaskalia ton hellenon pateron kai ekklesiastikon syggrapheon mechre kai ton kappadokon* (Athens, 1972); S. Agourides, *Ti einai theologia* (Athens, 1983); George Mantzarides, "He ennoia tes theologias," *Kleronomia*, 1 (1969) 103-20; Nikos Nissiotis, "La Théologie en tant que Science et tant que doxologie," *Irénikon*, 23 (1960) 291-310; and Athanasios Jevtic, "Methodologia tes Theologias," in his book: *Christos arche kai telos* (Athens, 1983) pp. 313-43.

¹⁶Nikos Nissiotis, "La Théologie en tant que Science et en tant que doxologie," *Irénikon*, 23 (1960), 291-310. For an admirable effort to write systematic theology from a doxological perspective see: Geoffrey Wainwright, *Doxology: The Praise of God in Worship, Doctrine and Life* (New York, 1980).

¹⁷Hans-Georg Gadamer, "The Hermeneutics of Suspicion," in *Hermeneutics*, Gary

from each other and from the greater tradition of the Christian Church, then the unity of the churches will be further shattered by the divisions of the world.¹⁸ For this reason, it is important to emphasize that the catholicity of Christian truth cannot be exhaustively contained in any one of these particular theologies because they express only the relationship of the Christian Gospel to a particular human situation. For this reason, all contextual theologies should be willing to critically converse with each other if they wish to maintain their Christian identity.¹⁹ However, this conversation is not an easy one because it presupposes that all local theologies and theologians are open to change and growth, and willing to be self-critical, recognizing their mutual relatedness while manifesting the richness and adaptability of the Christian faith in a variety of human situations.

Generally, contextual theologies challenge us to bridge the gulf between "saying" and "doing" theology by making our response to the Gospel as concrete and lively as possible and by recognizing that Orthodoxy and Orthopraxy, theory and praxis, idea and lifestyle, doctrine and ethics are mutually related. One derives from the other and, at the same time, is criticized and tested by the other. It is in actions of love that our faith in God gains credibility and becomes a reality that slowly but steadily transfigures the world. This kind of theology, however, presupposes and demands the linkage of our theological enterprise with social analysis.²⁰ Praxis must be based on and informed by social analysis. Social analysis must become an essential element in the theory inspiring praxis. The praxis of social transformation has greater possibilities to be effective only to the extent that it properly understands the intricacies of the situation that needs to be changed. At this point questions are raised as to whether there is a value-free social analysis that theology can use without compromising its integrity by becoming an instrument of an ideology. Here,

Shapiro and Alan Sica, eds. (Amherst, 1982). James Cone, "The Social Context of Theology," in *Doing Theology Today* (Madras, 1976) pp. 17-41.

¹⁸Nikos Nissiotis, "Ecclesial Theology in Context," p. 123.

¹⁹It is the task of Christian theologians in the midst of contextual and conflicting theologies to enter into dialogue with one another, to break down human divisions of oppressor and oppressed, black and white, men and women, South American and European, North American and African, Christian and non-Christian, which have falsely separated human beings from one another; and to seek that larger dimension of church catholicity that unites all in dignity, justice, and equality in God's dominion.

²⁰This, I believe, is the most novel and challenging element of contextual theologies that needs to be studied carefully since it invites Christian theology to relate its message to the insights of the social sciences. On the proper relation between theology and the social sciences see: Peter Berger, *A Rumor of Angels*:

we must outrightly reject the contention of many contextual theologians that only Christianity which is reinterpreted in the light of the Marxist analysis of capitalist society corresponds to the demands of the Gospel. In some circumstances the resources of the Marxist analysis of society may be a helpful tool for understanding social reality, but it is far from being the only possible one or even the best.²¹

In the process of doing contextual theology there is the danger of reducing theology to mere human ideology of social transformation or to elevate human ideologies to theological truths. Both of these dangers should be avoided as detrimental to the essential nature of our theological task which is to bring all people to unity, in justice, with God through his holy Church. Theology must remind the world of the essential ambiguity of all human ideologies and accomplishments since they contain, in themselves simultaneously, goodness and evil. The ultimate liberation of the world from evil and sin will come as a result of God's initiative and saving actions in history. Theology, criticizing the world from the perspective of the coming reality of God's kingdom, unmasks all the explicit and inexplicit inhumanities of social ideologies. It challenges the world to move closer to God in order to recover its true nature and destiny and thus turn from a society of alienated individuals into a community of persons who love each other freely and seek in their relations, to experience the justice and peace of God. Theology should not lead its audience to sentimental or uncommitted interiority, but to social involvement accompanied by a process of personal transformation. Individual salvation is fundamental, but it cannot be separated from the permanent concern for relevant social action.²²

Contextual theologies, despite the fact that they serve as necessary correctives against ivory-tower academic theology, contain in themselves some dangerous tendencies. It is possible to accept or

Modern Society and the Rediscovery of the Supernatural (New York, 1969). For Orthodox reflections on this matter, see: Nikos Nissiotis, "Koinoniologike theorese tes threskeias," *Koinonia*, 11 (1984), 79ff. Stanley S. Harakas, "An Orthodox Theology of Development," *Theologia*, 54 (1983) 817-57.

²¹Peter Berger, *The Capitalist Revolution: Fifty Propositions about Prosperity, Equality and Liberty* (New York, 1986); Michael Novak, *Will It Liberate? Questions about Liberation Theology* (New York, 1987).

²²James E. Hug, ed., *Tracing the Spirit: Communion, Social Actions, and Theological Reflections* (New York, 1983); Gustavo Gutierrez, *We Drink from Our Own Wells: the Spiritual Journey of a People* (New York, 1984). For an interesting linkage of Orthodox Spirituality and social action see Olivier Clement, *Vyzantio kai Christianismos* (Athens, 1985); Nikos Nissiotis, "The Theological Significance of the Technological and Social Revolution," *Diakonia*, 3 (1968) pp. 168-83.

sanctify anything and everything in the name of contextual theologies and indigenous praxis as genuine and legitimate forms of expressions of Christian faith and hope. For the remedy of this problem, authentic criteria of detecting genuine Christian truth should be explicitly adopted. The same is also true of "who" and "what" determines the experience and particularities of a specific group of people that any contextual theology claims to address, and how it is possible for others to have solidarity and participation in these experiences. Contextual theologies cannot be absolute and exclusive articulations of Christian truth. They need to be complimented by the biblical, conciliar and patristic tradition of the undivided Church. Otherwise, Christianity will be in danger of losing its distinctiveness, vitality, and critical force, only to disintegrate into a number of contradictory ideologies. It is also possible that the intrinsic provisionality (*theologia in via*) of contextual theologies may become a temptation to deny the universality of Christian revelation and universal human contexts and values. Despite these claims, there is a basic human context or situation which is perennially and universally valid and applicable such as finiteness and sinfulness of man, the need of forgiveness, the need of communion, and so on. Hence, the task of theology does not seem to be exhausted by contextual theologies. These theologies must be situated in the greater context of the Church's catholicity which may enlarge their scope, leading them into the fullness of the truth.

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possible for those who love him and observe his commandments to dwell eternally in his presence. Those who followed the prescriptions of the Torah, the essence of the Covenant relationship, were believed to have faithfully preserved the truth. God revealed his truth to them in and through the Hebrew Scriptures.

Spirit of Truth is an absolutely fascinating, heavily documented, book that accomplishes what it sets out to do, namely, to reveal the influence of the Old Testament, Zoroastrianism and the Qumran texts on the shaping of the figure of the Spirit in Israel's religious experience. The spirit of truth—spirit of deception dualism, as in 1 John 4:16, is shown to be rooted in the Dead Sea Scrolls and ultimately in the ethical—eschatological dualism of the Iranian prophet Zarathustra. It clearly indicates how Israel came to know the Spirit as a blessing, sanctifying, protecting, and revealing Divine Presence.

Spirit of Truth surely deserves to be read by every Orthodox scholar of both the Old and the New Testaments and even by the general reader with an interest in the world of the ancient Near East, but especially by those with an interest in the Judaic and Christian traditions.

John E. Rexine

The Challenge of Our Past. By John H. Erickson. Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1991. Pp. 174 with Index.

At a time when available material on the canonical tradition of the Orthodox Church in the English language is still relatively scarce compared to that of other theological disciplines, it is heartening to discover the present publication. And although some might be tempted to attribute this relative scarcity to a "defunct" theological discipline, the author of this fine collection of essays reminds us that they constitute a "living" tradition. Tradition, after all, "reveals the spirit at work in both past and present" (p. 7).

The author of these essays is a respected canonist, who teaches the "living" canonical tradition of the Orthodox Church at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary. He is, therefore, eminently qualified, as his essays show, to articulate the ways in which this tradition is alive and applicable in the lives of all those to whom it pertains.

Ten important issues relevant to the Orthodox Church today and

“originally presented in widely differing circumstances to widely varied audiences” (p. 5) make up the content of this book. Contemporary situations and possible solutions are presented in the context of clearly defined historical references to patristic teaching and canonical tradition.

Appropriately, the introductory essay is a discussion of “The Orthodox Canonical Tradition.” This tradition is often expressed in one of two ways, both of which are extremes. The one extreme is represented by the legalist, who responds to the Church as an institution. For him the canons are a system of regulations which define membership and the obligations of members. The other extreme is represented by the anarchist, who finds the Church as institution irrelevant, even harmful to its purpose. For him the real task of the Church is helping people with their many problems. The solution lies in understanding the Church as a horizontal community which experiences vertical communion. Only when this occurs can one expect canonical norms to serve the purpose for which they were intended,—to assist those in the Church to live out their true nature as members of the Spirit—filled Body of Christ.

The temptation to absolutize any one period of Church history, a weakness to which those who resist change are prone, is avoided in the essay on “Penitential Discipline in the Orthodox Canonical Tradition.” Although the reality of sin, repentance and forgiveness remains steadfast as in earlier centuries, the means by which this reality is expressed today are not necessarily the same. We are thereby reminded of the need in our own time to guard against the tendency to compartmentalize our lives in a way which prevents them from being directed by the Church. This raises for those responsible, the obligation to return to the educative aspect of penance so that repentance is encouraged in every area of our lives.

“Orthodox Perspectives on Divorce and Remarriage” is the result of dialogue with Western Christians about a matter of mutual concern. Although there is interest in the practice of the Eastern Church regarding divorce and remarriage, it is not always correctly understood. This essay attempts, successfully, to dispel misconceptions about this practice. It also reveals the divergent approach among the Orthodox themselves with regard to the status of marriages performed outside the Orthodox Church. It would serve us well to define the theology upon which we base a variant practice.

In the essay “The Priesthood in Patristic Tradition,” an essential

point made with regard to our understanding of priesthood today is its reduction to "narrowly cultic terms" (p. 54). We are reminded that the fathers had a much more broad understanding of priestly ministry, one which included not only sanctifying aspects, but also teaching and governing aspects as well. "The spiritual gift of discernment and a proper sense of 'economy'" (p. 59) are the essential ingredients necessary for the fulfillment of this ministry. We are reminded further that with one notable exception, the fathers remain silent on the question of women's ordination. The author concludes with several interesting observations from patristic teaching which run counter to the argumentation that because the priest acts "in persona Christi," he must therefore be a male.

What the essay "Eucharist and Ministry in Ecumenical Dialogue" lacks in length, it makes up in breadth of theological reflection. Sequentially, it is appropriately placed after the study on priesthood, in view of the issue of the ordained ministry and its relationship to the eucharist, addressed in the present essay. Eucharist and ministry are not treated in isolation by the author, but are situated together in a broader ecclesial context. As such, they "are seen as (structures of the Church) arising from. . .the Church's life of faith, . . .above all as the corporate life of the faithful gathered as Christ's body in the eucharist" (p. 65). The question raised about the adequacy of our church structures to the present is seen as a challenge to reexamine them, "past and present, in the light of the Church's unchanging nature and purpose" (p. 71).

Regardless of one's personal view on the merit of our commitment to the ecumenical enterprise, one must admit its influence upon the theological agenda set for reflection and articulation. This is again apparent in the following essay devoted to an investigation of "Collegiality and Primacy in Orthodox Ecclesiology." As the author makes quite clear, the central importance of ecclesiology in ecumenical discussions cannot be overstated. It is therefore inevitable that for the Orthodox—Roman Catholic encounter in particular to be productive, the sensitive question of collegiality and primacy must be thoroughly pursued. Nevertheless, although there appears to be a "common comprehension of Christians" (p. 77) on ecclesiological issues, the author cautions that there is a disparate understanding of the same words and sources used. It is on "the task of locating and exploring some of these differences" (p. 77) that he then focuses to establish the above point.

With the essay on "The 'Autocephalus Church'," we are confronted with a current Inter-Orthodox debate of major proportions. One need only consider its inclusion among the ten agenda items currently under study in preparation for the Great and Holy Council to be convened, it is hoped, in the not too distant future. Although the bulk of the essay concentrates on the ways in which the term "autocephalus" has been understood and experienced throughout history, there appears to be no convincing precedent for today's canonical impasse as to who grants autocephaly. Furthermore, neither of the two views represented in this debate has been able to predominate within world Orthodoxy. One can only hope that a consensus will be reached in this sensitive matter already under study in anticipation of the Great and Holy Council.

"The Problem of Sacramental 'Economy'" resulted from the agenda of the Orthodox Theological Society in one of its annual meetings. It reminds us of the important role this body is called upon to play in the life of the Church in America. With regard to the problem at hand, it reveals the distressing variety of practice existing here and elsewhere in the reception of sacraments performed outside the canonical limits of the Orthodox Church. The author's purpose in this essay is to "examine the ways in which the term "oikonomia" was used in Byzantine canonical literature, giving particular attention to the question of orders" (p. 117). What is clear is that there is "need for greater precision in the use of this term (oikonomia)" (p. 126). When expedient, many voices are heard claiming "oikonomia" to be "a limitless power making what otherwise is invalid to be valid" (p. 126). This, the author convincingly points out is not and never was the case.

The essay which follows, "Leavened and Unleavened: Some Theological Implications of the Schism of 1054," reveals the author to be equally conversant with both church history and the study of canonical tradition. A thorough knowledge of history, in any event, allows for the proper assesment of the context which gave rise to canonical tradition. In the present study, we are confronted with historical data which challenges the long held theory attributing the schism of 1054 to the disagreement between East and West on the issues of papal primacy and "filioque". Careful study, in fact, shows that the most significant controversy of the day was the use of the Latins of unleavened bread in the eucharist. The theological arguments put forth by both sides in defense of their positions are formidable.

Yet, for the Byzantines, at least, what appears to have been lacking in their approach was an exploration of the theological propositions which they considered self-evident.

Concluding the collection of essays is a historical-theological study on "Filioque and the Fathers at the Council of Florence". Although this council is usually hailed as a success that failed, the author takes the bold stand of characterizing Florence as "a failure that almost succeeded" (p. 160). This he attributes to "the way in which the fathers were presented, read and understood the council itself" (p. 160). Regardless of the view held with regard to the characterization of the council, one must acknowledge the openness with which the author states his case. His unbiased assessment of the facts provides the objectivity necessary in reading history correctly and it is the basic ingredient required in pursuing dialogue.

In a word, one might say that this important collection of essays reflects throughout an openness and objectivity which are refreshing and hopeful. The reader is challenged time and again to think through the implications of preserving the past without really understanding it. Whether engaged in Inter-Orthodox or ecumenical dialogue, the author employs the same persuasive technique, prodding us on to examine the past with the intention of upholding a tradition which is alive for today. Certainly nothing less should be expected of one who earnestly yearns to see the Church the vibrant institution intended by her Founder.

Lewis J. Patsavos

On the Person of Christ: The Christology of Emperor Justinian. Translated and Introduced by Kenneth Paul Wesche. Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1991. Pp. 203. \$14.95, soft.

It is very encouraging to note that St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, the Holy Cross Orthodox Press, the St. Nectarios Press, and the Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies are publishing fine translations of original Patristic and Byzantine sources, thus making available to English readers crucial documents for the proper understanding of the historical development of the Christian Church. An excellent example of this is the volume entitled *On the Person of Christ*, which contains translations of *Against the Monophysites*, *Concerning the*

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The Gospel Message in a Secular Context

BISHOP DEMETRIOS TRAKATELLIS

THIS SHORT PRESENTATION IS PART OF THE TOPIC "THE MESSAGE of the Church Contextualized," assigned to the faculty of Holy Cross School of Theology. My colleagues on the same panel will deal with the topic from the perspective of dogmatics, ethics, and liturgics. I will limit myself to a brief and generalized report on some biblical aspects related to the issue under discussion.

My specific theme is "the Gospel message in a secular context," or in "a secularized world." The tacit assumption of this paper is that we, as Church and theology, are living today in societies which are characterized by varying degrees of secularization, and that, regardless of optimistic or pessimistic¹ predictions, secularism will probably stay in one form or another, for an unforeseeable period of time.²

¹ Perhaps the most pessimistic position was articulated by S. S. Acquaviva, in his book *The Decline of the Sacred in Industrial Society* (New York, 1979) pp. 201-02, when he wrote: "From the religious point of view, humanity has entered a long night that will become darker and darker with the passing of the generations, and of which no end can yet be seen. It is a night in which there seems to be no place for a conception of God, or for a sense of the sacred, and ancient ways of giving a significance to our own existence, of confronting life and death are becoming increasingly untenable."

² The theory that secularism is on the rise as an all-pervasive phenomenon and that religion is on a course of decline and ultimate demise, seems to be untenable today. For a detailed discussion of this topic see: R. J. Neuhaus, ed. *Unsecular America* (Grand Rapids, 1986). See also: M. E. Marty, "Religion in America Since Mid-century," *Daedalus* 3 (1982): 149; A. M. Greeley, *Unsecular Man* (New York, 1972); P. Berger, *A Rumor of Angels* (Garden City, 1969). It is characteristic that H. G. Cox, who in the sixties wrote *The Secular City* (New York, 1965), in the eighties wrote *Religion in the Secular City* (New York, 1984), and a paper under the reveal-

The present study is divided into two parts: the Secular Context and the Gospel Message.

The Secular Context

The first basic question that confronts us is a question of clarification and fundamental definitions: What exactly is the meaning of the term "secular context"?

The word "context" does not seem to create particular difficulties. Context here stands for culture and civilization, for socio-economic conditions, for philosophical, political, ideological, and religious currents, for technological progress and status, for all vital factors that exist in a given historical setting of a concrete society, and thus constitute the essential characteristics of the life of that society. "Context" appears to be a convenient "code word" which contains and conveys in a condensed form all the above mentioned concepts and ideas.

The term "secular," on the other hand, is not so easy to define. What precisely does it signify in the phrase "secular context"?

The adjective "secular" belongs to a family of words like secularism, secularization, secularity, secularize, for the meaning of which there seems to exist a disagreement among scholars.³ We could distinguish generally two⁴ main lines of meanings or significations:

ing title "Religion Returns to the Secular City." In J. W. Angell and E. P. Banks, eds. *Images of Man* (N.P., 1984) pp. 93-109. The extremely strong presence of religion and its inexhaustible vitality in the modern world, however, does not mean that secularism has run its course and is coming to an eclipse.

³ For the various scholarly theories on secularism and its implications for the religious life especially in America, see the following most recent works: J. F. Childress and D. B. Harned, *Secularization and the Protestant Prospect* (Philadelphia, 1970); L. Shiner, "The Meanings of Secularization," In Childress and Harned *Secularization*, pp. 30-42; P. Berger, *Facing up to Modernity: Excursions in Society, Politics and Religion* (New York, 1977); Marty, "Religion in America;" M. A. Noll, N. O. Hatch, and G. M. Marsden, *The Search for Christian America* (Westchester, 1983); G. Barna and W. P. McKay, *Vital Signs: Emerging Social Trends and the Future of American Christianity* (Westchester, 1984); J. Neuhaus, *The Naked Public Square* (Grand Rapids, 1984); J. Turner, *Without God, Without Creed: The Origins of Unbelief in America* (Baltimore, 1985); Neuhaus, *Unsecular America*; G. M. Marsden, "Are Secularists the Threat? Is Religion the Solution?" In Neuhaus, *Unsecular America*, pp. 31-51; E. C. Ladd, "Secular and Religious America." In Neuhaus, *Unsecular America*, pp. 14-30.

⁴ This is a very drastic reduction aiming at sketching a basic, simplified picture. Authors like L. Shiner, for instance, speak about five meanings of the term secular: a) decline of religion, b) conformity with the world, c) desacralization of the world, d) disengagement from society, and e) transference of faith and morality issues from

a) For many specialists the term "secularism" and its derivatives means in general "a system of political or social philosophy that rejects all forms of religious faith." In fact this is, more or less, the type of definition given by the college dictionaries.⁵ The main concept here is the rejection of any religious element as a viable component of a political or a social philosophy. P. Berger offers a somewhat similar, but more subtle, definition when he speaks about secularization as antagonism "to the dimension of transcendence in the human condition."⁶ A clearer anthropological bent is discernible in this instance. In spite of their differences, however, the above definitions share the same fundamental perception of secularism as involving and implying a confrontational position, an antagonism to or rejection of the religious faith and the notion of transcendence as related to the human condition.

b) For other scholars, however, secularism and its derivatives do not necessarily and exclusively signify a polemical, antagonistic attitude against religion. Two years ago, in an *ad hoc* conference at the Rockford Institute Center on Religion and Society, in New York, specialists in the field like R. J. Neuhaus, E. C. Ladd, G. M. Marsden, and P. Johnson, presented a different aspect on secularism in addition to or parallel to the antagonistic one. E. C. Ladd, for instance, in his paper "Secular and Religious America," pointed out that for a proper understanding of secularism it is necessary to take into account three important and interrelated sets of revolutionary changes stretching through the last two or three centuries: "(1) The commercial and later industrial revolution, which dramatically expanded the wealth of nations; (2) the Enlightenment and subsequently scientific revolution which greatly altered our perceptions of ourselves and the universe; and (3) the egalitarian revolution which brought down ascriptive class societies and established more open, participatory, and sometimes even democratic systems in their stead." It was this whole

the religious to the secular level, L. Shiner, "The Meanings of Secularization," pp. 30-42. On the other hand, J.J. Doherty speaks about the term "secular" as having "a wide range of meanings and shadings, just about as wide and unsatisfying as the word "religious," and argues that the "term secularization inherits this ambiguity," J.J. Doherty, *The Communication of Christian Message in a Secularized Society*, Th.D. dissertation, Albert-Ludwigs Universitat (Freiburg, 1975) p.162

⁵The definition given here within quotation marks comes from *The Random House College Dictionary* (Revised Edition, 1982). See also the definition given by Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language: "Secularism: a view of life or of any particular matter based on the premise that religion and religious considerations should be ignored or purposely excluded."

⁶Berger, *Facing up to Modernity*, p.78.

complex process that led to the formulation of the fundamental meaning of secularization."⁷

Contemplated from such a perspective, secularism, according to the above-mentioned scholars, might be associated with the development of prosperity, the advancement of knowledge, and the promotion of a society which provides the best for individuals and the community. It might also be associated with technological progress. In this sense, secularization conceptually approximates modernization and does not necessarily entail an attack on religious faith or a decline of religion. Thus, M. Marty and E. Ladd can speak about a condition in contemporary America where "shifts tend to occur within the borders of an all-pervasive religiousness and a concurrent and persistent secularity,"⁸ or that "America today is what it has always been—a highly religious, intensely secular society."⁹

The paradigm of America, however, is not applicable to all technologically advanced states. Statistics, for example, demonstrate that in Sweden secularism and modernity run parallel to religious decline.¹⁰ The example of America, nonetheless, helps in overcoming the misconception that secularization, basically and unilaterally, means "a confrontation between the positive value of religion and the negative value of secularization."¹¹ It further helps in drawing a distinction between secularization as a proper methodology technique and secularism as a world view from which the transcendent is excluded. As G. Marsden put it, "most of natural science and technology involves the use of a secularized methodology that entails temporarily excluding religious and spiritual considerations for the purpose of analyzing natural causes. It should be strongly emphasized, however, that such methodologies are artificial and do not themselves, constitute world-views. This distinction between technique and world-view is especially valuable in addressing the antitheistic secularists."¹²

One then may justifiably assume that the adjective "secular" in the phrase "secular context," could mean "anti-religious, anti-transcendent," but also "ultra-modern,"¹³ technologically advanced

⁷Ladd, "Secular and Religious America," p.24.

⁸Marty, "Religion in America," p.151.

⁹Ladd, "Secular and Religious America," p.23.

¹⁰"Surveys by the Gallup Organization and Gallup International Research Institute for the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate and European Values System Study Group, 1981." In Neuhaus, *Unsecular America*, pp. 115-26.

¹¹Marsden, "Are Secularists the Threat?" p.50.

¹²Marsden, "Are Secularists the Threat?" p.50-51.

¹³It is not accidental that H. Cox uses as a subtitle for his book *Religion in the*

man, prosperity and social enhancement." Secular, in other words, can be a term loaded either with a negative theological-metaphysical signification or with an anthropological-methodological orientation which is neutral vis-a-vis religion, or both.

The Gospel Message

In view of the informative data presented above, we can now proceed with the discussion of the second basic question: How do we understand the connection between the Gospel message and secular context? How do we envision the task of interpreting and offering the truth with respect to divine revelation to a secular world?

The central theme of the divine revelation, as we have it in the New Testament, is the event of God becoming man: "The Logos became flesh and dwelled among us full of grace and truth" (Jn 1.14), or to use the statement from Philipians, "he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men" (Phil 2.7). This is the fundamental message of the biblical texts, a message presented in a veiled form in the Old Testament but fully, splendidly, and definitely in the New Testament.

Divine revelation interpreted primarily as revelation via God's incarnation, with all its consequences, seems to have a unique place and function within a secular context. Secularism, under all its aspects and forms, emphasizes the absolute importance of the human element, the centrality of the human condition. It is more or less anthropocentric. What more could secularism ask than that offered by the essential message of the Gospel, namely that God became fully, irrevocably, and genuinely man? What teaching could place human existence higher than a teaching in which God assumes the fullness of human nature?¹⁴ Just the fact of *ἐνανθρώπησις*, incarnation, just the person of Christ, perfect God and perfect man, creates for anthropology possibilities unheard of by any anthropocentric philosophy. To put it boldly and somehow paradoxically, the fact of "the Logos having become flesh," truly understood, offers a far more radical and advanced anthropocentric speculation. The development of human existence to its optimum and its maximum, both individually and

Secular City, the phrase "Towards a Postmodern Theology."

¹⁴John Chrysostom in his exegesis of John 1.14, succinctly underlines this particular point. He writes: "The Logos became flesh and dwelled among us. . . . He has put on our flesh, not in order to leave it behind again, but in order to have it with him forever. If this had not happened, our flesh could not be seated on a King's throne; wearing it, Christ was worshipped by the host of the heavenly beings, the archangels, the angels, the thrones, the dominions, the rules, the authorities. What language and what intelligence could describe and present such a really supernatural and awesome honor done to our human race? An angel or an archangel (could perhaps offer such a description)? No! No one in any place, either from those who

socially, constitutes an absolute imperative for the Gospel message viewed as focusing on God's incarnation. To formulate this idea in more abstract technical terms: the anthropologically interpreted incarnation of God in Christ seems to be a central item in dealing with the question of relating the Gospel message to a secular society.

To be sure, "incarnational anthropology" has been part of the Church's teaching throughout her history. Here, however, we are talking about emphasis and priority, about a thorough "incarnational anthropology" as a major component of the Gospel message in the years to come.

The second major item, in discussing the question of the Gospel message in a secular context, is language and communication. Language as the means of communication within a secular society and world has undergone an extraordinary evolution, proliferation, and diversification. Next to immediate, person-to-person oral communication, we have the tremendous growth of language as written communication (books, periodicals, newspapers), as the main vehicle of radio and television communication, and as a component in a mixed form comprising visual and sound effects (cassettes, videos, etc.).

The people of the Church responsible for conveying the Gospel message used to take into account the linguistic phenomenon described above, a phenomenon characteristic indeed of modernity and secularization. What exactly could be the agenda in this particular issue?

Divine revelation presented in the biblical texts has been expressed in concrete language related to specific historical and geographical conditions. Hence, from the very beginning, as the Gospel started being spread beyond the original place of revelation, interpretation in all its forms, from translation to theological commentary, became a vital, indispensable, and continuous effort of the Church.

Interpretation of the Gospel message as an ongoing process in all its facets seems to be an absolute priority of the agenda of the Church as she faces a secular world: interpretation as communication aiming primarily at making the language and content of divine revelation understood by secularized people, truly and fully understood. This has to do with language as content, and as vocabulary, grammar, syntax, style. It has to do also with language as form and mode of communicative expression, i.e., immediate oral

are in heaven or from those who are on earth. . . ." Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, Homily 11, PG 59.80.

¹⁵In a paper presented at the Atlanta Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical

delivery, written text, cassette, video, radio broadcast, or TV show.¹⁵

There is one additional aspect in the discussion about language and communicative interpretation related to the Gospel message. Divine revelation as we see it in the New Testament is not limited to language formulations. Jesus Christ spoke and taught extensively, but he also used signs, he performed miracles, he did works. Through all of them he communicated with the people; he conveyed to them the saving message of the kingdom of God. The important point here is that the Gospel message was proclaimed and transmitted, not only by means of language, but also by means of signs, works, and events. In a secular context where data, facts, and palpable and visible realities count, the truths of divine revelation in Christ should be transmitted in all possible ways through and beyond language. In that sense the life of the Church, a vibrant and healthy life, especially in its expression of liturgy and diaconia, constitutes a superb means of transmitting to the secularized world the message of the kingdom conveyed originally by Christ's signs, miracles, and works.

At this juncture, since we are discussing non-verbal ways of communication, we should mention iconography, the visual arts and fine arts in general, as outstanding possibilities of communicating and promoting the Gospel message.

The development of language as communication and the parallel emphasis on any other means of communication should be a very active and high priority issue on the agenda of the Church and her theology as we approach the twenty-first century. In this case, the statement of Saint Paul in 1 Corinthians 9.22, "I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some," is a superb expression of the ardent desire to open all possible lines of communication with the world, secular or non-secular, and keep them alive.¹⁶

There is one more major item in dealing with the question of the Gospel message in a secular context: this is the concept, or rather

Literature, November, 1986, T.E. Boomershine even suggested that in our time we seem to have moved from interpretations presented mainly through books to interpretations presented mainly through video-cassettes or radio-TV broadcasts. Despite its excess, the suggestion has a certain validity and should be further studied.

¹⁶In his exegesis of this passage within its context (1 Cor 9.19-23), Chrysostom offers a passionate description of Paul's consuming desire to communicate the Gospel message: "Paul, having been commissioned to preach the Gospel and proclaim the message entrusted to him, had to work with all his power and diligence in order to devise and invent myriads of means for this end. . . . Hence, he went beyond any limits, jumping even into heaven. . . . Can you see the extraordinary situation here? He says that he has become all things to all men, and he has done so, not expecting to save all, but that he might by all means save even some." Chrysostom, *Homilies on First Corinthians*, Homily 22, PG 61.183-84.

the reality, of transcendence. The position of secularism vis-a-vis transcendence is, in its extremes, overtly hostile to simply neutral. Secularism is imbued with and dominated by immanence. Here, the messengers of the Gospel are confronted with a serious problem.

Some theologians proposed as a solution to the problem playing down the whole notion of transcendence. Such a solution is wrong because it deprives the Gospel of its essential content. When one starts moving in that direction, one ends up surrendering to the secularistic immanence. Transcendence should remain as it is forever, namely, an integral part of divine revelation, no matter what the degree of secularization. In fact, transcendence is indispensable for the proper understanding of any holistic anthropology. Only with the control of transcendence can we properly speak about anthropocentric emphases. The basic statement that God became man stresses both immanence and transcendence. It was God who became man; it is Christ, God and man, who offers the possibilities for human development ad infinitum. Transcendence is necessarily involved, because God is involved by assuming the form of a human.¹⁷ While paradoxical, the statement that secularism, in its study of human existence, needs transcendence, is valid and pivotal.

But then, how exactly is transcendence to be presented as a component of the Gospel message to a secularized society? Not, of course, in a language of abstract philosophical terms or in a vocabulary borrowed from discussions on principles of logic. Transcendence should be offered along the lines of divine revelation preserved in the biblical texts, namely along the lines of incarnation. The unique event of God having become man points to the transcendence of God in the proper direction. The transcendent God is, to use Pauline terminology, "the Father of our God Jesus Christ" (Eph 3.14) and our Father. The transcendent God is, to use the Johannine formulation, the Logos "who was in the beginning, who was with God, who was God," "through whom all things were made" (Jn 1.1-3). Here we encounter transcendence related to creation, incarnation, and the Fatherhood

¹⁷While insisting on the fact that, in the incarnation of the Logos, God became fully and authentically human, Chrysostom in interpreting John 1.14, emphasizes the other side too, namely, that in Christ, God remains unchangeably God: "Christ by coming down to us did not diminish at all his own (divine) nature, but rather elevated us, who were forever sitting in darkness and dishonor, to an ineffable glory . . . So when you hear that 'the Logos became flesh' do not be troubled. For what happened was not that the divine essence changed and fell into flesh, but that remaining what it was took on the form of a servant. . . ." The phrase "the Logos became flesh" does not describe the transformation of the divine nature but the assumption of the real human nature, Chrysostom, PG 59.79. The concept here is inseparably connected to the concept of incarnation.

of God. This transcendence is not an abstraction or idea foreign to the secular mind because of its total unrelatedness to existence. This is a transcendence of a relational nature which points to a God who, although the absolute other, is concurrently and forever connected in a unique bond of love with human beings and saves them. Such a God demolishes the limiting walls of the stifling secularistic universe, and liberates the human mind from its bondage to the naked here and now. He offers the best perspective for an understanding of human existence as created and depending, created out of love and depending on love. Even the most humanistically oriented secularist theoreticians could not dream of a more dignified anthropology. But this is an anthropology illumined by transcendence and depending on transcendence in all its possible aspects and ramifications.

In the years to come, the topic "the Gospel message in a secular context" will, in all probability, remain a central topic for the Church and her theology. In dealing with this topic, we should avoid the one-sided, monolithic understanding of secularism as a phenomenon of an exclusively negative theological-metaphysical meaning. We should also avoid espousing the unproven assumption that secularization, following an inexorable historical determinism, will constantly increase and finally prevail at the expense of religion. Such an assumption simply flies in the face of recent data and developments. Human history, especially macrohistory, is not predictable.

What the present paper has suggested is the necessity to view the phenomenon of secularism in its broadest possible spectrum of meanings, a spectrum inclusive of both negative and positive aspects. Furthermore, the suggestion has been offered to go beyond unfounded predictions and focus on the immediate and real challenges created by secularism in conjunction with the content and communication of the Gospel message. Along these lines we proposed that the Gospel message in a modern, or perhaps post-modern, secular context, should place emphasis and priority on three major issues: first, on a responsible and consistent "incarnational anthropology," namely, on a thorough anthropology based and depending on God's incarnation in Christ and its unique and radical consequences; secondly, on a full-scale and constant communicative activity including all possible means of verbal and non-verbal communication, and aiming at transmitting the Gospel in its wholeness and true interpretation; and thirdly, on the notion and reality of transcendence, especially God's transcendence as revealed in Christ, as being relational in essence, and indispensable for any whole, authentic, and dynamic anthropology.

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The Iconoclastic Controversy—A Theological Perspective

BLAGOY TSCHIFLIANOV

THE SEVENTH ECUMENICAL COUNCIL (787) RESOLVED THE THEOLOGICAL controversy the Iconoclastic heresy which has shaken the Byzantine empire for over a century (726-843), and gave the Church a final defense for the use of icons in worship.

The researchers of Iconoclasm point to various reasons for its advent and development. Among these are included: a struggle against idolatry or the danger of superstition;¹ the mania of Emperor Leo III to reorganize the Church and the state;² the influence of Judaism and of heresies similar to Manichaeism which renounce idolatry;³ the Paulicians;⁴ the disasters which enveloped the Empire, considered as the punishment of God for the idolatry of the people;⁵ the desire of the emperors to carry out land reform and the beginning of a struggle with the wealthy monasteries and monks, who profited from the painting of icons;⁶ the decision of the authorities to reach a compromise with Islam;⁷ and the class struggle.⁸

¹Θρησκευτική και 'Ηθική 'Εγκυκλοπαίδεια, (1964) 5, pp. 395-405.

²J. Pargoir, "Saint Methode et la persecution," *Echos d' Orient*, 6 (1903) 191-93.

³P. J. Alexander, "An Ascetic Sect of Iconoclasts in Seventh Century Armenia," *Late Classical and Medieval Studies in Honour of Albert Mathias Freund, Jr.*, Kurt Weitzmann, ed. (Princeton, 1955) pp. 151-60.

⁴V. Stefanides, *Ekklesiastike Historia* (Athens, 1948) pp. 231-33.

⁵L. Brehier, "Sur un texte relatif au debut de la querelle iconoclast" *Echos d' Orient* 37 (1938) 17-22.

⁶P. Ouspensky, "Seventh Ecumenical Council and the Dogma of Iconoveneration," *Journal Moskovskoy Patriarchii*. (1958) 40-48.

⁷Alexander Schmemmann, *Historical Road of Eastern Orthodoxy* (Crestwood, 1977), p. 200.

⁸M. Sjuzjumov, *Θ. Η. Ε.* p. 396.

There can be no doubt that all of the reasons cited above assisted the emergence and development of iconoclasm in Orthodox Byzantium. However, new research shows that the dispute over icons arose first in the Church itself, and state authority interfered in a peremptory way only later.⁹

Since His Eminence Metropolitan Joseph of Akron will dwell upon the historical framework of that struggle, I have limited my task to focusing attention on the theological controversy about the icon and the veneration of icons in the first Christian millennium, so that the meaning of the Seventh Ecumenical Council can be comprehended.

The difficulty of the specified task stems from the fact that information from the first seven centuries which clarifies the position of the Church on the question of icon use is missing. When some sporadic statements about the icon are excluded, the general silence of the holy fathers and teachers serve to suggest their agreement to the practice of the Church. Some documents from the epoch of the controversy are missing. The letter of the holy Patriarch Germanos and the two letters of Emperor Leo III (717-741) to Pope Gregory II did not reach us. The acts of the Iconoclastic councils of 754 and 815 were destroyed by the Orthodox, and the acts of the Council of 861, convened to fight the remnants of the iconoclasts, were destroyed by the Ignatians. Fortunately, however, the following writings concerning the Iconoclastic controversy have been preserved: the replies of the pope to the patriarch and the emperor; the definition of the Council of 754, preserved in the acts of the Seventh Ecumenical Council;¹⁰ the definition of the Council of 815, preserved in a paper by the holy Patriarch Nikephoros of Constantinople;¹¹ the acts of the Seventh Ecumenical Council;¹² and the works of the leaders of the Orthodox party, Saint John Damascene (+749),¹³ Saint Nikephoros of Constantinople (+829),¹⁴ Saint Theodore the Studite (+826),¹⁵ and Saint Photios of Constantinople (+859).¹⁶

⁹Schmemmann, *Historical Road*, p. 200.

¹⁰Hefele-Leclercq, *Histoire des conciles de l' Eglise*, 3 part 2, pp. 697-703.

¹¹"Ελεγχος καὶ ἀνατροπὴ τοῦ ἀθέσμου καὶ ἀορίστου καὶ ὄντως ψευδωνύμου ὄρου τοῦ ἐκτεθέντος παρὰ τῶν ἀποστηράντων τῆς καθολικῆς καὶ ἀποστολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας κ.τ.λ.," Hefele-Leclercq, pp. 1217-221.

¹²Ibid. pp. 760-75.

¹³Mary H. Allies, trans. *Saint John Damascene, On Holy Images* (London, 1898).

¹⁴Nikephoros Antirrhetikos, PG 100.380; Cyril Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453* (Englewood Cliffs) pp. 175-76.

¹⁵Catherine P. Roth, trans. *Saint Theodore the Studite, On the Holy Icons* (Crestwood, 1981).

¹⁶Vasilios Yanopoulos, "Eikon kata ton hieron Fotion," *Theologia* (1980) 158-85; 379-405.

The first Church, composed of Jews who believed in Christ, must have continued the practice of the synagogues to not paint objects of honor and veneration. With the spread of Christianity outside of Palestine and with the organization of special places for divine worship, such as the catacombs, we see the appearance of separate images. They are not icons of Christ, the holy Theotokos, the saints, or events of the sacred history of the Scriptures, but an expression of ideas about Christ and the Church.¹⁷

Such were the image of the fish in the water, which symbolized salvation through baptism; the Good Shepherd, the Lamb, the wine, Orpheus, and the alpha and omega, which symbolized Christ; the anchor hope and the olive tree, which symbolized immortality and peace; the stag at the spring, which symbolized Christians hurrying towards the source of the gospels; the ship amidst the waves, which symbolized the Church, the phoenix—the resurrection; Noah in the ark—salvation through baptism; the sacrifice of Isaac—Christ's sacrifice; the feeding of the five thousand—the holy Eucharist; and others.

During that earliest time of Christianity, when the Church carried on a struggle with everything pagan, including idols and idolatry, there were many voices speaking against the images. Among these were the authors of the *Didache*¹⁸ and the Epistle of Barnabas,¹⁹ the apologists Justin, Aristides, Athenagoras, Tatianos, as well as Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and Eusebios of Caesarea.²⁰ However, their pronouncement against idols were in connection with the images called Simulacra and which had as their objective the cult for God himself. We have no text of that time which renounce the honor and veneration of icons.²¹

The decision of the Illeberius Council (306) states: "There should not be icons in the Church so that on the walls there will not be painted that which is venerated and adored" (36th rule).²² It forbids the icons in the churches for disciplinary, but not dogmatic, reasons.²³

After the signing of the Edict of Milan (313), which granted the Church complete freedom to organize its divine worship in the newly erected, stately temples for its religious needs, it passed over to

¹⁷Schmemmann, *Historical Road*, pp. 200-01.

¹⁸*Didache* 3, 4.

¹⁹*Epistle Barnabas*, 20, 1.

²⁰*Dictionnaire d' Archéologie Chrétienne et Liturgie* (DACL) 7, pp. 207-15.

²¹*Ibid.* p. 181.

²²"Placuit picturas in ecclesia esse nondebere, ne quod colitur et adoratur in parietibus depingatur" in *Dictionnaire d' Archeologie Chretienne et Liturgie*, 7, p. 215.

²³*Ibid.*

the painting of the objects of its honor and veneration, and from there, the honoring and venerating of those icons. Holy Scripture, the *martyrologia*, and the lives of the saints became a rich source of topics for the development of sacred Christian art.

One of the champions of Orthodoxy, Saint Basil the Great (330-379) encourages historical painting in his homily on the martyr Barlaam with the words: "Let me be overwhelmed by your icons depicting the great acts of the martyr! Let me look at the martyr most vividly depicted in your icon . . . Let also Christ, who instituted the contest, be depicted in your icon."²⁴

The historical icon, which made its way into the Christian temple as its natural decoration and was integrated into worship, acquired a multi-faceted significance. The holy Fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries emphasized its didactic, commemorative, mystagogical, and highly edifying significance.

Saint Basil explains the icon's didactic character with the words: "What the words present through the sense of hearing, the painting silently shows through seeing."²⁵ Later, that concept would be adopted by the Seventh Ecumenical Council, "for those things which illustrate each other emphasize each other."

Saint Gregory of Nyssa stresses the commemorative character of the icon when he states, "I have often beheld a painted representation of the passion, and have never passed by the sight without shedding tears, for art brings the story vividly to the eyes."²⁶

Saint Basil emphasized the mystagogical character of the image when he says to the emperor: "He who looks at the emperor's image in the public square, and calls the one in the picture 'emperor,' does not acknowledge two emperors; nor is his power divided, nor his glory fragmented. Just as the power and authority which rules over us is one, so also the glorification which we offer is one, and not many. Therefore, the honor given to the image passes over to the prototype."²⁷ Saint John Damascene applied the same conclusion to the Christian icons.²⁸ This belief that the honor given to the image passes over to the prototype was later adopted by the Seventh Ecumenical Council,²⁹ as well as by Saint Theodore the Studite and Saint Photios of Constantinople.

²⁴Constantine Cavarnos, *Orthodox Iconography* (Belmont, 1977) p. 13; PG 31.489 A-C.

²⁵Ibid. 509.

²⁶Cavarnos, *Iconography*, p. 14.

²⁷Roth, *Saint Theodore*, pp. 48, 57; P. Trempelas, *Dogmatike*, 3, pp. 404-05.

²⁸Saint John Damascene, *The Orthodox Faith*, 4, 16; C. Mango, *The Art* p. 169.

²⁹Hefele-Leclercq, *Histoire* p. 773.

During the fifth century that concept was generally adopted in the Church. Pseudo-Dionysios the Areopagite formulated it as follows: "Truth in the likeness, the archetype in the image; each in the other except for the difference of essence." That is, regardless of the difference in essence, [icon and archetype, everything is in everything.] The icon, being the characteristic depiction of the archetype, manifests it, and the archetype exists in the icon, not in essence, but in likeness, grace, and energy.³⁰

After the awareness of the mystagogical character of the icon and the belief in its transforming and sanctifying character, there remained one step which was taken very early, as is understood by the above quoted testimony of Pseudo-Dionysios. The icon was an object of honorable veneration (τιμητικῆς προσκυνήσεως) in the likeness of the book of the Gospels, and the sacred Cross. In his letter to the Emperor Julian, Saint Basil also confesses: "I honor and venerate the characteristic traits of their (saints') icons, mostly those which are handed down by the Apostles and not forgotten, but are depicted throughout all our churches."³¹

During the seventh century icon veneration was an established practice in the life of the Eastern Church. Leontios of Neapolis in Cyprus (+ 702) wrote:

I sketch and paint Christ in every place . . . and as thou, when thou makest them . . . so that men may see them plainly, may remember them and not forget them . . . and as thou, when thou makest thy reverence to the book of the law, bowest down, not to the substance of skins and dried ink, but to the sayings of God that are found therein, so I do reverence to the image of Christ. Not to the substance of wood and paint. . . . But by doing reverence to an inanimate image of Christ. . . . I think to embrace Christ himself and to do him reverence. . . . We Christians, by bodily kissing an icon of Christ, or an apostle or martyr, are in spirit kissing Christ himself or his martyr.³²

From all that has been said so far, it is clear that the Church considered the icon not an end in itself, but a means and in the end, a symbol; that is, a sensitive image which assists the soul in its ascension to a spiritual and invisible reality, so as to place a bridge be-

³⁰Pseudo-Dionysios, 4.3.1, (PG 3.473); Roth, *Saint Theodore* p. 48; V. Yanopoulos, "Eikon" p. 392, note 136.

³¹Epist. 360 (PG 32.1100); P. Trempelas, *Dogmatike*, Vol.3, p. 403.

³²Schmemmann, *Historical Road*, pp. 202-03.

tween it and the object of its veneration.³³

That purely theological understanding of the icon could hardly disturb even the most spiritually disposed Christian. However, doctrine and practice often miss each other. That is what probably occurred in regard to the Christian icon. That there were abuses of the icon, which were not exceptional, convinces us of the struggle within the bosom of the Church, which later gave way to an extreme which became recognized in history as Iconoclasm.

I shall illustrate the above concept with an interesting letter of the Emperor Michael II and Theophilos to Louis the Pious of 824. They wrote to him:

This, too, we declare to your Christ-loving affection that many clerics and laymen, alienating themselves from apostolic traditions and not observing the definitions of the fathers, have become originators of evil practices. First, they expelled the venerable and life-giving Crosses from the holy churches and in their stead they set up images, in front of which they placed lights and burnt incense, and held them up in the same esteem that is due to the venerable and life-giving Cross upon which Christ, our true God, deigned to be crucified for the sake of our salvation. They sang hymns to these images and worshipped them and asked help of them. Many people wrapped clothes round them and made them the baptismal godfathers of their children. Others, who were desirous of taking the monastic habit, did not have recourse to persons more advanced in the religious life, who formerly would have been wont to receive the hairs of their head, but, using images allowed their hair to fall, as it were, into the bosom of the same. Certain priests and clerics scraped the paint of images, and mixing this with the Eucharistic bread and wine, let the communicants partake of this oblation after the celebration of the mass. Others again placed the body of the Lord in the hands of images and made the communicants receive it therefrom.

Others yet, spurning the church, used panel images in the place of altars, and this in ordinary houses, and over them they celebrated the holy ministry, and they did in the churches many other illicit things of this kind that were contrary to our faith and appeared to be altogether unseemly to men of learning and wisdom.³⁴

³³P. Trempeles, *Arche kai character tes Christianikes latreias* (Athens, 1953) p. 180.

³⁴Mango, *The Art* pp. 157-58.

That the emperors enumerated real occurrences of abuse is seen from the fact that the leader of the icon-venerators of that period, Saint Theodore the Studite writes about one of them, namely the use of an icon instead of a godparent. To the Spatharios John he writes:

We have heard that your lordship had done a divine deed and we have marvelled at your truly great faith, O man of God. For my informer tells me that in performing the baptism of your God-guarded child, you had recourse to a holy image of the great martyr Demetrios instead of a godfather The great martyr was spiritually present in his own image and so received the infant. These things, being incredible, are unacceptable to profane ears and unbelieving souls, and especially to the Iconoclasts, but to your piety clear signs and tokens have been revealed.³⁵

Similar protests and actions were recorded in the East. Various groups or individuals took a position against icons on the basis of their own particular theology. Not only heretics but individuals of Jewish, Muslim, Monophysite, or Docetist inclination opposed icons. In the sixth century a bishop of Asia Minor declared that many of the bishops in Asia Minor "had no delight in the icon." These bishops were also instrumental in the eighth-century controversy.³⁶

The letter of the emperors is from the second period of Iconoclasm, but as Baynes has correctly recorded, "in practice practically all the arguments, pro and contra, had been anticipated in the preceding centuries."³⁷

As it is known, the dogmatic definition of the second Nicaean Council of 787 did not put an end to the theological dispute between Iconoclasts and Icon-venerators (Iconophiles). It continued not only until 843, when the Empress Theodora convened a council which proclaimed "the triumph of Orthodoxy," but long afterwards when Saint Photios convened a council in 861 against the remnants of Iconoclasm.

The Second Nicaean Council (787) was not recognized by Rome and the Eastern patriarchates as ecumenical until the latter part of the ninth century, when Saint Photios urgently requested ecumenical recognition of the Council on two separate occasions (in his Encyclical of 866 and before the Council of Constantinople in 867). Consequently,

³⁵Ibid. pp. 174-75.

³⁶Daniel J. Sahas, *Icon and Logos* (Toronto, 1986), pp. 21-22.

³⁷Mango, *The Art*, p. 150; N. H. Baynes, "Idolatry and the Early Church," and "The Icon before Iconoclasm," *Byzantine Studies and other Essays*, (London, 1955) p. 116 ff; p. 226 ff.

the second Nicaean Council was proclaimed the Seventh Ecumenical Council, after the consciousness of the entire Church—the main criterion of infallibility and authority—testified through its experience to the orthodoxy of its definition.³⁸

I shall now present the theological arguments for and against icon veneration as we find them in the sources of the first half of the eighth century through the latter half of the ninth century.

The Biblical Argument

All Iconoclasts place as the cornerstones of their convictions the Second Commandment (Ex 20.4-5) and other places in Holy Scripture which speaks against idols. That fact is revealed in practically all sources which have come to us concerning the dispute between Iconoclasts and Icon-venerators.

In his reply to the Patriarch Germanos, Pope Gregory II stated: "We must not, in regard to that (venerating icons) perceive obstacles in the words of holy Scripture."³⁹

He also wrote to Emperor Leo III: "You write: we must not worship (God forbids it) that which is made by human hands, as well as any likeness of what is in heaven or on earth."⁴⁰

Saint John Damascene echoed the same argument of the Iconoclasts. He writes: "Now the opponents say: God commands Moses. . . . You shall worship the Lord your God and him only you shall serve, you shall not make any idol of what is in heaven above or in the earth beneath."⁴¹

In the definition of the Iconoclastic Council (754) we read: Lucifer "poured out all his wickedness against man and with deception he alienated him from the glory and splendor of God by suggesting that he could worship the creatures rather than the Creator." The law of Moses and the prophets condemned that sin.⁴² In addition, the Iconoclasts made the following points in favor of their thesis: (1) God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth (Jn 4.24); (2) You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or in the earth beneath (Deut 5.8); (3) God spoke to the Israelites from the midst of the fire at the top of the mountain, but he did not show his face (Deut 5.4); (4) "They exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man, and worshiped and served the creature rather than

³⁸Sahas, *Icon* p. 41.

³⁹Hefele-Leclercq, *Histoire* pp. 645-46.

⁴⁰*Ibid.* pp. 660-69.

⁴¹Saint John Damascene, *The Orthodox Faith*, 4, 16, p. 6.

⁴²Sahas, *Icon* p. 55.

the creator” (Rom 1.23-35); (5) Other verses which are even less convincing than the above are also cited.⁴³

The definition of the Iconoclastic Council (815) briefly addressed the question of the use of icons in the Church. In it we read: “The Emperors Constantine (Kopronymos) and Leo . . . convened a council . . . and condemned the authority (of the Scriptures and holy Fathers of the Church) and traditional practice . . . to make icons and worship them.”⁴⁴

Saint Theodore the Studite addresses that basic argument of the iconoclasts at the beginning of his work. He wrote: “The heretics say: the making of icons is completely forbidden in the Scriptures, because they say: ‘you shall not make for yourselves an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth; you shall not worship or serve them, for I am the Lord, your God’ ” (Ex 20.4-5).⁴⁵ Saint Photios of Constantinople spoke of and examined the same argument of the Iconoclasts.⁴⁶

The Orthodox Church challenged those isolated biblical texts with the entire doctrine of the Scriptures. With quotations and facts from the Bible, the Church proclaimed in truth that the purpose of the prohibitions against idol worship in the Scriptures was to prevent Israel from practicing idolatry, and that these passages do not refer to the production of handmade things in general, which serve for the glory and service of the true God, such as God commanded Moses to have made.

In his letter to Patriarch Germanos and in his reply to the first letter of Emperor Leo III, Pope Gregory II refuted that argument of the Iconoclasts. To Leo III he wrote: “God gave that law because of idolaters, who ruled the promised land and who worshiped golden animals. . . . Since handmade things (χειροποίητα) exist in order to serve and honor God, the Lord chose among the Israelites two men, Bezalel and Oholiab (Ex 35.30-34), for the production of those handmade objects, which are used to the glory and the service of God,”⁴⁷ and the pope enumerated those objects: the Cherubim and the seraphim, the golden table and the Ark of the Covenant, the stone tablets, the jar holding the manna, and Aaron’s staff, and he asked the emperor: “Are those, yes or no, images and objects, made by

⁴³Hefele-Leclercq, *Histoire* p. 701.

⁴⁴Ibid. p. 1218.

⁴⁵Roth, *Saint Theodore* p. 24.

⁴⁶Yanopoulos, “Eikon” p. 380.

⁴⁷Hefele-Leclercq, *Histoire* pp. 660-69.

the human hand?"⁴⁸

Saint John Damascene, who based his objections upon the impossibility that God would command contrary things, wrote on the same topic. He asked the following question of his adversary: "Answer me this question: Is there only one God? You answer: 'Yes, there is only one Lawgiver.' Why then does he command contrary things? [The Cherubim are not outside of creation . . .] would you say that the Ark and the staff and the Mercy Seat were not made . . . what was the tabernacle itself; Was it not an image?"⁴⁹ And "what of the famous Temple of Jerusalem? Was it not constructed by human hands and skill?"⁵⁰

The fourth session of the Seventh Ecumenical Council was dedicated to compiling biblical evidence for the veneration of icons. As such it pointed out the following:

- (1) Ex 25.17-22 and Num 7.88-89, where it speaks of the Ark of the Covenant, the Mercy Seat, and the Cherubim;
- (2) Ezek 41.1, 15, 19, where the cherubim are portrayed with human faces, and the palm trees which the prophet Ezekiel saw in a vision in the new temple of God;
- (3) Hebrews 9.1-5, where Saint Paul speaks of the ark of the covenant and the articles found therein: the golden jar with the manna, Aaron's staff, the tablets of the covenant, as well as the Cherubim. In connection with the above texts, Patriarch Tarasios recorded: "The Old Testament already had its divine symbols: the Cherubim, for example, which passed into the New Testament; and if the Old Testament had the Cherubim, which cast a shadow upon the throne of grace, then we should have the icons of Christ and the saints, who with their shadow, protect our throne of grace."⁵¹ The patriarch drew to the attention of those angels always appeared in that form. Moses depicted the Cherubim in that form, he said, because that is how they appeared to him on the mountain (Ex 25.40)." John, the vicar of the East, noted that God himself appeared to Jacob in human form and wrestled with him (Gen 32.40).⁵²

Saint Theodore the Studite systematically and fundamentally ex-

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Allies, *Saint John Damascene*, p. 14-15.

⁵⁰Saint John Damascene, *The Orthodox Faith*, 4, 16; C. Mango, *The Art*, p. 170.

⁵¹Hefele-Leclercq, *Histoire*, p. 765.

⁵²Ibid. pp. 765-66.

amined the biblical argument of the Iconoclasts. He stated:

When and to whom were those words spoken (that is, the second commandment)? They were spoken before the age of grace to those who were confined under the law (Gal 3.23), to the men of antiquity, so that they would be protected from foreign idols. This law had to be made for those who through their forefather Abraham had formed a chosen people and fled the abyss of polytheism because there is one God and Lord of all "whom no man has seen or can see," as it is written (1 Tim 6.16). For him there is no designation, no likeness, no circumscription nor definition. . . . I pass over to the fact that what was utterly forbidden in the case with God was not forbidden in every other case because when he gave the prohibition to the theophant Moses, he commanded him immediately after that: "And you shall make two cherubim of gold" . . . (Ex 25.18) "make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall come about that everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live. So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole; and if a serpent bit any man, when he looked to the bronze serpent, he lived" (Num 21.8-9). Now you can see the whole doctrine of the Scriptures . . . even though the serpent differs from us in its form as a reptile, it was accepted figuratively as a symbol of Christ (Jn 3.14). If formerly God condescended to be symbolized by a serpent, so as to heal those who were bitten, how could it not be pleasing to him and appropriate to set up the image of the bodily form which was his since he became man? And if the symbol in animal form healed those who had been bitten, by its right alone, how could the holy representation of Christ's true form do other than hallow those who see it?⁵³

Following those biblical examples, Saint Theodore passed on to the natural newly-emerged objection of the Iconoclasts: "Well, then God falls into contradiction and opposes himself."⁵⁴ "What madness," he cried out, "the prohibition applies to likening the Godhead to all those creaturely objects, such as the sun, the moon, the stars or whatever else, upon which the idols are modeled (Deut 4.19), but the command aims to symbolically lead Israel by means of certain sculptured and modeled forms toward the contemplation

⁵³Roth, *Saint Theodore*, pp. 24-25.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, p. 25.

and worship of the one God. . . .⁵⁵

Saint Photios of Constantinople does not stray from the framework of the statements expressed on the subject by his predecessors in defense of the Orthodox doctrine of the icons and icon veneration. He, too, dwells on the fact that the same God who gave the second commandment commanded Moses to arrange the tabernacle, to place two cherubim over the mercy seat, and to use multicolored fabrics for the Tabernacle, even though elsewhere multicolored fabrics were characterized as "falsifications." Also, since it is not possible, according to him, for God to fall into contradiction and refute himself, in such instances we must always look for some deeper meaning of the Scriptures and to find the particular purposes for which God gave those laws. However, the "deeply hidden theosophy" of the separate prohibitions in connection with the images according to Saint Photios, is that through them, God sought to protect the Israelite nation which was prone to idol worship, to divert it from the danger of worshipping idols as gods. Consequently, according to him, all those prohibitions in the Holy Scriptures have no bearing on or connection to the holy icons.⁵⁶

In conclusion to what was mentioned in the first point of this work, we shall say that in the dogmatic definition which it processed, the Seventh Ecumenical Council addressed the question of the biblical basis of the icon and icon veneration, in agreement with what Saint John Damascene said on that subject: that is, that the tradition for the making and venerating of icons is unwritten (*agrafos*).⁵⁷ To those who seek evidence on that subject in the holy Scriptures, he objects: "Where do you find in the Old Testament or in the Gospel the 'Trinity,' or 'consubstantiality,' or the 'one substance of Christ,' or 'his two natures,' expressed in so many words? Still, as they are contained in what Scripture does say and defined by the holy Fathers, we receive them and anathematize those who do not."⁵⁸ Thus, that is why the three hundred and sixty-seven holy Fathers at the Seventh Ecumenical Council at Nicea introduced their dogmatic decisions with the words: "We keep all the ecclesiastical traditions which have been handed down to us, whether written or unwritten, free of innovations. One of the traditions which we thus preserve is that of making representational paintings which is in accord with the history of the preaching of the Gospel, as confirming the real and not merely the

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Yanopoulos, "Eikon" pp. 382-83.

⁵⁷Mango, *The Art*, p. 171.

⁵⁸Allies, *Saint John Damascene, The Orthodox Faith* p. 88.

imaginary incarnation of God the *Logos*, and as contributing to our good in other ways. For those things which illustrate each other emphasize each other.”⁵⁹

The Patristic Argument

Apart from the authority of Holy Scripture, the Iconoclasts had recourse to the tradition of the holy Fathers to prove that the icon and its veneration are an innovation of the Church, without patristic base. In his second letter to Pope Gregory II, Emperor Leo III asked him: “How did it happen that the six councils did not say anything about the icons?”⁶⁰ After quoting from Holy Scripture, the members of the Iconoclastic Council of 754 quoted material from the Holy Fathers in defense of their doctrine, namely: an apocryphal writing of Saint Epiphanius of Cyprus; an interpolated text of Theodotos of Ankyra; and isolated sentences of Saint Gregory the Theologian, Saint John Chrysostom, Saint Basil the Great, Saint Athanasios of Alexandria, Saint Amphilochios of Iconion, and Eusebios of Caesarea.⁶¹

I have already quoted what was said on the matter in the definition of the Iconoclastic Council of 815, namely that “the Emperors Constantine (Kopronymos) and Leo . . . convened a council . . . and condemned the authority (of the Scriptures and the Holy Fathers) and traditional practice . . . to make icons and to worship them.” In his letter to Louis the Pious, the emperors Michael II and Theophilos call icon veneration “alienation from apostolic tradition.”⁶² Saint Theodore poses the following question to the heretics: “What if I bring forward more authoritative texts from the Holy Fathers? How would you refute them, when they utterly forbid the erection of an image of the Lord or the Theotokos or any other of the saints? Epiphanius is one of them, the man who is prominent and renowned among the saints.”⁶³ Saint Photios reflected on the thesis of the Iconoclasts that icon veneration is not a tradition of the apostles or the holy Fathers, and that in the early Church, only heretics had icons.⁶⁴

Pope Gregory II replied to Leo III briefly and convincingly: “Do you not see that they (the six ecumenical councils) did not occupy themselves with that which is adopted and admitted by everyone?”⁶⁵

⁵⁹Cavarnos, *Iconography*, p. 53.

⁶⁰Hefele-Leclercq, *Histoire* pp. 671-72.

⁶¹Ibid. p. 701.

⁶²Mango, *The Art* p. 157.

⁶³Roth, *Saint Theodore*, pp. 73-74.

⁶⁴Yanopoulos, “Eikon” p. 383.

⁶⁵Hefele-Leclercq, *Histoire* pp. 671-72.

In the fourth session of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, the fathers cited the following patristic testimonies in favor of the icons and icon veneration:

- (1) Saint John Chrysostom, in his panegyric of Meletios of Antioch, says that the believers placed his icon elsewhere. The same holy father, in another address, spoke of an icon of an angel, which caused the barbarians to flee;
- (2) Saint Gregory the Theologian expressed his emotions in regard to the icon of the sacrifice of Isaac;
- (3) Saint Cyril of Alexandria also spoke of an icon of the sacrifice of Isaac;
- (4) Saint Gregory the Theologian told of the conversion of a woman of frivolous behavior when she saw the icon of Saint Palemon;
- (5) Antipater of Bostra spoke of a statue of Christ erected by the evangelical woman with the issue of blood when she was healed;
- (6) Asterios of Amasea described in detail an icon which represents the martyrdom of Saint Euphemia;
- (7) Two fragments of the martyrdom and miracles of the Persian martyr Anastasios, who perished in 627. These fragments proved the accepted custom of placing icons in the church and venerating the relics;
- (8) Saint Athanasios the Great spoke of the miracle in Beirut where the Jews pierced the icon of Christ with a spear. Blood and water immediately flowed from it. Many were restored to health through this miracle, resulting in the conversion of many people;
- (9) Saint Nilos in his letter to Heliodoros mentioned a monk, to whom the martyr Platon appeared in the same image as was portrayed in his icon. The iconoclasts had read at their council (754) part of a letter from Saint Nilos to Olympiodoros in defense of their thesis. However, at the Seventh Ecumenical Council, the entire letter was read. In it Saint Nilos did condemn some frescoes which were seen throughout the churches and monasteries. These icons portrayed rabbits and fishing expeditions. He recommended that they be replaced with the sign of the Cross. In the same letter he praises the depiction of scenes from the Old and New Testaments and the painting on the walls of the churches for the instruction of the illiterate. The part of the letter which praised the icons is precisely the part the Council of 754 passed over in silence. In the fourth

session of the ecumenical council (787), other testimonies of the holy Fathers in favor of icon veneration were also read.⁶⁶

In the fifth session of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, works of the holy Fathers were read by the Iconoclasts in defense of their thesis:

(1) Saint Cyril of Jerusalem in his second catechism condemned not the icons but Nebuchanezzar for taking the Cherubim from the temple in Jerusalem;

(2) Saint Symeon the Stylite in his letter to Emperor Justin II asked for the punishment of the Samaritans who destroyed the holy icons;

(3) two dialogues between a heathen and a Christian, and a Jew and a Christian, written in defense of the icons;

(4) two places in the Apocrypha "*περίοδοι τῶν Ἀγίων Ἀποστόλων*," which reflected heretical concepts;

(5) Eusebios of Caesarea, who condemned the wish of Constantia, wife of Emperor Licinius to own an icon of Christ. The Fathers at the council were not overly concerned with him because everyone knew him as a man of doubtful Orthodoxy.

Since much time had passed and the Fathers at the council felt that adequate evidence had been reported concerning the position of the holy fathers on icons, it was decided as unnecessary to read the remaining fifteen pages with similar material. It became clear to everyone that the writings quoted by the iconoclasts were either apocryphal, mutilated, falsified, or misinterpreted.⁶⁷

Saint Nikephoros of Constantinople was in harmony with the holy Fathers of the Second Ecumenical Council. In connection with the allegation of the Iconoclasts that icon veneration does not have the support of the holy Fathers, he wrote: "We affirm that the delineation or representation of Christ was not instituted by us, that it was not begun in our generation, nor is it a recent innovation. Painting is dignified by age, it is distinguished by antiquity, and is coequal with the preaching of the Gospel . . . undertaken by the Apostles, this practice received the approval of the Fathers."⁶⁸

Saint Theodore the Studite also examines the allegation of the iconoclasts and states that the texts they used to support their position "are not from saintly fathers, but from heretical interpolaters;

⁶⁶Ibid. pp. 766-67.

⁶⁷Ibid. pp. 769-71.

⁶⁸Mango, *The Art* p. 175.

otherwise, they would agree with the inspired fathers.” In regard to the authority of Saint Epiphanius of Cyprus, whose text they claimed to use, he retorted:

We know that Epiphanius is a saint and a great wonder worker. Sabinios, his disciple and a member of his household, erected a church in his honor after his death and had it decorated with pictures of all the Gospel stories. He would not have done that if he had not been following the doctrine of his own teacher. Leontios also, the interpreter of the divine Epiphanius’ writings, who himself was the bishop of the church of Neapolis in Cyprus, teaches very clearly in his discourse of Epiphanius how steadfast he was in regard to the holy icons, and reports nothing derogatory concerning him. So the composition about the icons is spurious and not at all the work of the divine Epiphanius.⁶⁹

However, because he knew that there would be persons who would continue to consider the questionable work as an authentic work of Saint Epiphanius, he quoted the holy apostle Paul: “But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a Gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed” (Gal 1.8). Furthermore, he continued:

For evidence, moreover, that we have received from the apostles themselves and have preserved up to the present time the tradition of erecting the icon of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Theotokos, and the saints—raise your eyes, look around, and see everywhere under heaven, throughout the sacred edifices and the holy monuments in them, these depicted and necessarily venerated in the places where they are depicted. Even if there were no dogmatic reason nor voices of inspired fathers to uphold both the erection and veneration of icons, the prevailing ancient tradition would be sufficient for confirmation of the truth. Who can presume to oppose this tradition?⁷⁰

Saint Photios subscribed to that which was said about the use of icons by his predecessors in the Orthodox faith. When speaking of the dogmatic decision of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, the Baptizer of the Bulgarians (865) wrote in his letter to King Boris I among

⁶⁹Roth, *Saint Theodore*, pp. 73-74.

⁷⁰*Ibid.*

other things: "In regard to the icon of Christ, our true God, according to the initial apostolic and patristic traditions and the statements of the holy scholars, in honor and esteem of the one depicted (the council) unanimously ratified and sealed it (the icon) so it would be an object of veneration and honor. . . ." ⁷¹ He also dwelled on another matter in the struggle with Iconoclasm, which had not been dealt with by his predecessors. According to the Iconoclasts, the tradition of "eminent Fathers" condemns the use of icons of Christ on the part of Simon the sorcerer and the gnostic group, the Carpocrathians in Rome (about the end of the second century). ⁷² This indicated that icons were not used in the Church, but those heretics who did use them did so "by pagan custom." Therefore, they were condemned by the Church. Saint Photios retorted that the truth is otherwise. Simon and the Carpocrathians were not condemned for using the icons of Christ, as the Church also used them in those times, but because they used them 'by pagan custom' that is, because they adored them as the heathens adored (ἐλάτρευον) the idols, but did not venerate them as did the church of Christ. ⁷³

In compliance with all that was said on the second point at hand, the holy Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council pronounced the following dogmatic statement: "We, as proceeding in the royal pathway, and following the divinely inspired teaching of our holy Fathers and the tradition of the universal Church . . . define with all exactness and care." In the end it concludes: "for thus is the teaching of our holy fathers, that is, the tradition of the universal Church, which from one end of the earth to the other has received the Gospel, strengthened." ⁷⁴

The Accusation of Idolatry

The Iconoclasts called the icons idols, those who venerated them idolators, and the veneration of the icons idolatry. They did not differentiate between idol and icon, thinking that the icons were idols, introduced by Satan, who in that manner initiated idolatry under the guise of Christianity.

In his reply to the first letter of Emperor Leo III, Pope Gregory II writes: "You now contend that they (icons) are in the place of

⁷¹Yanopoulos, "Eikon" p. 383.

⁷²Irenaios, *Against Heresies* 1,25,6, PG 7.685, 2. Hippolytos, *Elenchus* 7, 32, Βιβλιοθήκη Ἑλλήνων Πατέρων 5, 333, 30-31: "καὶ εἰκόνας δὲ κατασκευάζουσι τοῦ Χριστοῦ, λέγοντες ὑπὸ Πιλάτου τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ γενέσθαι." See Yanopoulos 383, note 117.

⁷³Ibid. pp. 383-84.

⁷⁴Cavarnos, *Iconography*, p. 53.

idols and that those who venerate them are idolators . . . you say that we bow down to stones, the walls, and the boards as if they were gods."⁷⁵

The definition of the Iconoclastic Council of 754 recorded: "Wanting to save mankind, God sent his Son in order to divert us from the error of venerating the idols . . . but Satan, unable to bear the sight, gradually again introduced idolatry under the guise of Christianity. . . . The only permissible presentation of the humanity of Christ is the bread and the wine in the holy Liturgy . . . he (Christ) commanded that bread be offered, and not an imitation of his human form, so that idolatry would not be revived. . . ."⁷⁶ The definition concluded with praises for the emperors and turning to them, he said: "You struck a mortal blow to idolatry."⁷⁷

Saint John Damascene, bearing in mind all the accusations of the Iconoclasts, writes: "It is a great disaster to suppose that the Church does not know God as he is, and that she degenerates into idolatry."⁷⁸

Saint Theodore the Studite begins his book with the accusation of the iconoclasts that those who venerate icons commit idolatry, and he formulates their comprehension as follows:

The heretics say: Surely there is not just one veneration if piety is shown to have many objects of veneration by the erections of icons, a practice by which some evils of the devil have been transferred from the pagan tradition, bringing the veneration of idols in the catholic Church. For every theologian knows that the Godhead is entirely incomprehensible and uncircumscribable.⁷⁹

Later he turns to the same matter when he presents the etymological argument of the Iconoclasts:

There is not difference, they say, between "idol" and "icon," for both mean the same. Idol comes from "form" in general (for its proper significance is not "that which is seen"). "Icon" comes from *eikos*, in the sense of "likeness." A likeness is simply that which is not its prototype, and so are both "idol" and

⁷⁵Sahas, *Icon*, p. 27.

⁷⁶Hefele-Leclercq, *Histoire* pp. 698-700.

⁷⁷Ibid. p. 703.

⁷⁸Allies, *Saint John Damascene, The Orthodox Faith* p. 2.

⁷⁹Roth, *Saint Theodore*, p. 20.

'icon,' for both words amount to the same meaning. However, to venerate an idol when claiming to venerate Christ circumscribed is impious, for it is utterly forbidden by the word of truth.⁸⁰

The Iconoclastic Council of 815 adopted all the decisions of the Council in 754, with one exception. It declared that, "we refrain, however, from calling them (the icons) idols, since there is a distinction between different kinds of evil."⁸¹ This decision of the Council of 815 probably remained in a book only, and the Iconoclasts continued to call the icons idols, and the Orthodox, idolaters.

Saint Theodore the Studite responded to the first refutation of the Iconoclasts declared at their council in 754 by declaring an anathema:

If anyone should rashly confuse the relative veneration of idols, (or) if anyone should transfer the scriptural prohibitions of idols and misapply them to the holy icon of Christ . . . (or) if anyone should claim that the salvific ornament of the church is an idolatrous invention.⁸²

Concerning the second refutation of the Iconoclasts Saint Theodore reflected on the withdrawal of the Iconoclastic party. He wrote:

At one time they blasphemously miscall the icon of our Lord Jesus Christ an idol of deceit; at another time they do not say so, but say instead that the depiction is good because it is useful for education and memory, but not for veneration. For this reason they assign the icon to a high place in the church, fearing that if it is located in a lower place, where it could provide an opportunity for veneration, it may cause them to fall into idolatry.⁸³

The Orthodox, in refuting the heretics, systematically and clearly developed the true doctrine about the icon as a sacred object of the faith which has nothing in common with the idol.

Pope Gregory wrote to Patriarch Germanos:

The Church is not deceived when it states that God permitted

⁸⁰Ibid. pp. 35-36.

⁸¹Mango, *The Art*, p. 169.

⁸²Roth, *Saint Theodore*, p. 40.

⁸³Ibid. p. 43.

the veneration of the icons, and that this veneration was not a pagan invention . . . they call an idol only a representation of that which has no quality of reality whatsoever: for example, the fact of the gods, invented by Greek mythology. The Church of Christ has nothing in common with idolatry, we do not worship a calf . . . we do not offer our children to the demons. . . .⁸⁴

To Emperor Leo III, who in his letter had written that the icon venerator worship "the stones, the walls and the boards," the pope replied: "but, Sir, that is not so: those articles (the icons) are for us a remembrance and a challenge, so that we will raise our indolent spirit toward heaven, by the means of the names which those icons bear, or by means of those whom they represent. We do not worship them as we worship God."⁸⁵ And also: "the people . . . honor those icons not with a cult of adoration (λατρεία), but simply with a relative cult (ταῦτα προσεχύνουσιν οὐ λατρευτικῶς, ἀλλὰ σχετικῶς)."⁸⁶

Saint John Damascene clarifies the difference between idol and icon when he draws a parallel between them and the two kinds of sacrifice, those of the pagans and the Jews. He writes:

Divine scripture condemns those who worshiped the works of carving, but also those who sacrificed to the demons. The pagans offered sacrifice, and so did the Jews; but while the pagans sacrificed to demons, the Jews sacrificed to God. And whereas the sacrifice of the demons was rejected and condemned, that of the righteous was acceptable to God. For Noah offered sacrifice and God smelled a sweet savor. He accepted the fragrance of Noah's good will and love towards him. Thus the carvings of the pagans are rejected and prohibited because they represent demons.⁸⁷

In his letter to Patriarch Tarasios, read at the second session of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, Pope Adrian wrote: "We venerate them with a relative cult (ταύτας σχετικῶς πόθῳ προσκυνούμεν) because they were made in the name of Christ and his ever-virgin Mother, in the name of the holy angels and all of the saints; but we reserve our adoration (λατρεία) and our faith only for God."⁸⁸

⁸⁴Hefele-Leclercq, *Histoire* pp. 645-46.

⁸⁵Ibid. pp. 671-72.

⁸⁶Ibid.

⁸⁷Mango, *The Art* p. 170.

⁸⁸Hefele-Leclercq, *Histoire* p. 763.

In the fourth session of the Seventh Ecumenical Council the fathers stated: "Not the council nor the emperor, as the Jewish sanhedrin maintains (that is, the council of 754) healed the Church of fallacy and idolatry, but Christ, the Lord."⁸⁹

At the fifth session of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, the deacon and archivist Constantine of Constantinople, after disclosing that the iconoclasts burned documents which testified against their doctrine, read his own work which substantiated that the martyrs defined the difference between idolatry and the veneration of icons in Christianity.⁹⁰

At the seventh session of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, after the adoption of the definition, all the members present signed the decree and shouted: "Such is our faith; such is the doctrine of the apostles; anathema to those who do not adopt it, who do not venerate the icons, who call them idols and who, because of that, accuse the Christians of idolatry."⁹¹

Saint Theodore the Studite answers to the accusation of idolatry in this way:

What do the holy icons have in common with the idols of pagan gods? If we were worshiping idols, we would have to worship and venerate the causes before the effects, namely Astarte and Chamos, the abomination of the Sidoneans, as it is written, and Apollo, Zeus, Kronos and all the other diverse gods of the pagans . . . of whom it is said 'worshipped the creation instead of the creator' (Rom 1.25), slipping into a single abyss of polytheism. We, however, have only one God whom we venerate as trinity . . . but because of his great goodness, one of the Trinity has entered human nature and become like us . . . for this reason Christ is depicted in images, and the invisible is seen. . . .⁹²

"For what person with any sense does not understand the difference between an idol and an icon? That one is darkness, and the other light? That one is deceptive, and the other infallible? That the one belongs to polytheism, but the other is the clearest evidence of the divine dispensation?"⁹³ When he answers to those, who say

⁸⁹Ibid. p. 768.

⁹⁰Ibid. pp. 769-70.

⁹¹Ibid. p. 773.

⁹²Roth, *Saint Theodore*, p. 20-21.

⁹³Ibid. p. 27.

that the Lord Jesus can be presented only in the eucharistic bread and wine, Saint Theodore writes: "Are they an image or the truth? If they are an image—what absurdity! You go from blasphemy to blasphemy . . . but if they are the truth—as indeed they really are, for we confess that the faithful receive the very body and blood of Christ, according to the voice of God himself—why do you talk nonsense as if the sacraments of the truth were mere symbols?"⁹⁴ Concerning the etymological argument of the Iconoclasts, Saint Theodore writes:

For the danger of idolatry comes from both 'icon' and 'idol' . . . we use the word 'icon' rather in reference to the bodily form of Christ; as in the beginning, in the creation of the world, this was already indicated at the formation of the first man. For God said: 'Let us make man in our image (εἰκόνα) and likeness' (Gen 1. 26). And again the word is used in the divine question, 'whose image (εἰκόνα) is this?' So from these passages, we obtain the proper use of the word 'image' or 'icon': by transference we use the words 'form' (χαρακτήρ) and likeness (ὁμοίωμα), but we never use the word 'idol' at all, even though it has the same meaning as 'similitude.' For it is restricted to the ancient worshippers of the creation and to anyone, now who does not venerate the Trinity indivisible in nature, in glory, and in power, or who does not confess the Incarnation of the Word.⁹⁵

Saint Photios emphasized that the pagan idols are matter, that is, gold, silver, or wood. But whereas the idols of the heathens, even though they have the same material base as the Christian symbols, cannot be sanctified—not by those who create them, nor by those whom they represent—the icons of the Christians are sacred, honorable, glorious, and venerable, and all that does not depend on the matter from which they are made, but from the power which comes "from above," that is, from God's grace, the noncreative power of God, and from the divine power for whom the icons are consecrated and whose name and image they bear.⁹⁶

The Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council renounced the accusations of the Iconoclasts that the icon is an idol, and that the veneration of the icon is idolatry, for in their dogmatic decision they

⁹⁴Ibid. p. 30.

⁹⁵Ibid. pp. 36-37.

⁹⁶Yanopoulos, "Eikon," pp. 394-96.

decreed the making of icons. In their definition we read: "Just as the form (*typos*) of the precious and life-giving Cross, so also the venerable and holy icons, both in painting and mosaic and other fit materials, should be set forth in the holy churches of God, on the sacred vessels and vestments, on the walls and on panels of wood and by the roads. . . ."⁹⁷

The Christological Argument

According to the Iconoclasts, the representation of Jesus Christ contradicts the fundamental dogma of Christianity, the incarnation of Jesus Christ. The personality of Christ cannot be depicted because he is God and man. Consequently in the icon the human as well as the divine nature of Christ must be depicted. The Godhead cannot be depicted. Thus, in an icon of Christ, either the divine nature is confused with the human nature, which is Monophysitism, or else, if the human nature alone is depicted the two natures are separated, which is Nestorianism. According to the Iconoclasts, when the icon venerator separated the flesh from the Godhead they proceeded as if it were a question of presenting the image of a mere man and attributing to the flesh personal existence, consequently inserting a fourth person into the Holy Trinity. The entire Christological dilemma of the Iconoclasts is built upon their comprehension that a real icon must have the same essence (in nature and by hypostasis) as its prototype.

The Iconoclasts point as well to the difference in the painting of Christ on the part of Romans, Indians, Greeks, and Egyptians and ask the question: "Which of the icons of Christ is the real one?" In the definition of the iconoclastic council of 754 we read:

Having looked into these matters with great diligence and deliberation, under the inspiration of the All-holy Spirit, we have also found that the unlawful art of the painted constitutes a blasphemy against this very fundamental doctrine of our salvation, that is, against the dispensation in Christ, and that it subverts these very holy and ecumenical six councils, convened by God, while it reinstates Nestorios, who divided the one Son and Word of God, who for us became man, into a duality of sons. Not only he, however, but also Arius and Dioskoros and Eutyches and Severus who, with regard to the two natures of the one Christ, teach that these were confused and mixed. . . . Thus, whereas all the God-bearing fathers and the holy and ecumenical councils have handed down the pure

⁹⁷Carvarnos, *Iconography*, p. 53.

and immaculate faith and confession, proven by God to be such, that one should not contrive any means of dividing or confusing that which is beyond reason and cognition, the unspeakable had a hypostasis of its own, and by attaching to the flesh a different person, which they claim to be depicted in an icon, this they show that they add a fourth person to the Trinity, and even more, they describe that which was assumed and deified as being without divinity. From those, therefore, who think they are drawing the icon of Christ, it must be gathered either that the divinity is circumscribable and confused with the flesh or that the body of Christ was without divinity and divided; and they also ascribe to the flesh the person with a hypostasis of his own, thus, in this respect, identifying themselves with the Nestorian fight against God.⁹⁸

That council anathematized everyone who:

endeavors through material colors to understand the divine impress of God the Word, according to this incarnation . . . endeavors to circumscribe with material colors in icons in an anthropomorphic way the uncircumscribable essence and hypostasis of God the Word because of the Incarnation . . . attempts to paint in an icon the undivided hypostatic union of the nature of God the Word along with that of the flesh—which two resulted in one, which is unconfused and undivided—calling this ‘Christ,’ while the name Christ implies God and man, and as a result of this, one proclaims absurdly a confusion of the two natures . . . sets aside the flesh which unites with the hypostasis of God the Word, thinking of it as mere flesh, and consequently endeavors to describe it in one part the Word of God and in the other the son of Virgin Mary, and if he does not confess that there is one and the same Christ, but rather that there was only a nominal union between them, and if he consequently describes in an icon the son of the Virgin, as if this had the hypostasis of his own, depicts in an icon the flesh which was deified by the union of the divine Logos. . . . He separates the flesh from the divinity that assumed and deified it, and as a consequence he renders it undeified . . . attempts to reform with material colors God the Word . . . for being supposedly a mere man, and if one separates him from the unseparable and unchangeable divinity—this way in-

⁹⁸Sahas, *Icon*, pp. 75-90.

roducing a fourth person in the Holy Trinity. . . .⁹⁹

The definition of the iconoclastic council of 815 did not formulate its own theology but adopted the christological argument of the council of 754. But when it condemned the decisions of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, presenting them as decisions of a frivolous woman (Empress Irene), it recorded: "It (the Seventh Ecumenical Council) decreed that the incomprehensible Son and Logos of God would be painted as he was during the Incarnation by means of dishonored matter."¹⁰⁰

The Orthodox responded to the sophisms of the iconoclasts with the following truths: If Christ cannot be depicted, then either he lacks a human nature (which is Docetism) or his human nature is submerged in his divinity (which is Monophysitism). If Christ's human nature is not changed or confused with his divine nature, he must be able to be depicted like any human being. If his natures are not separated, then the one portrayed must be the incarnate God, even though the divine nature itself cannot be portrayed. Indeed, it is not the nature which is portrayed (whether divine or human), but the hypostasis. According to Orthodox teaching, the Logos who assumed human nature is no man Jesus apart from the incarnate God. Therefore Christ's human nature cannot be portrayed as nature, but only as it occurs in the hypostasis which combines the two natures. And in this hypostasis Christ's humanity has the properties of an individual man, including a particular appearance which was seen and can be portrayed.¹⁰¹

Saint Theodore the Studite, who fundamentally examined the Christological arguments of the iconoclasts wrote:

According to the word-play which you (the iconoclasts) call an argument, neither could the Godhead remain incomprehensible in being comprehended—but it was wrapped in swaddling clothes! Nor could it remain invisible in being seen—but it was seen. Nor could it remain intangible in being touched—but it was touched! Nor could it remain impossible in suffering—but it was crucified! In the same way you should understand that the Godhead has also remained uncircumscribable in being circumscribed. For these are properties just as those others are: but the properties of the uncircumscribable nature are those in

⁹⁹Ibid. pp. 154-60.

¹⁰⁰Hefele-Leclercq, *Histoire* p. 1220; Mango, *The Art*, p. 168.

¹⁰¹Roth, *Saint Theodore*, pp. 11-12.

which Christ is recognized to be God, while the properties of the circumscribed nature are those in which he is confessed to be man. Neither one makes the other into something new, nor departs from what it was itself; nor is one changed into the other (for such a change would produce the confusion which we have refused to admit): but he is one and the same in his hypostasis, with his two natures unconfused in their proper spheres. Therefore you must either accept the circumscribed, or if not, then take away the 'visible' and 'tangible' and 'graspable' and whatever adjectives are in the same category. Then it would become obvious that you utterly deny that the Word became flesh—which is the height of impiety.¹⁰²

To their accusations that the Orthodox, in painting Christ, accept that he is a mere man because the painting is characteristic of an ordinary man, Saint Theodore objects:

Christ did not become a mere man, nor is it orthodox to say that he assumed a particular man, but rather that he assumed man in general, or the whole human nature. It must be said, however, that his whole human nature was contemplated in an individual manner (for otherwise how could he be seen?), so that he is seen and described, touched and circumscribed, that he eats and drinks, matures and grows, works and rests, sleeps and wakes, hungers and thirsts, weeps and sweats, and whatever else one does or suffers who is in all respects a man. Therefore we must admit that Christ is circumscribed, although not a mere man (for he is not one of many, but God made man); or else we may be attacked by the swift serpents of heresy whom you follow, namely those who say that he came only in appearance and fantasy.¹⁰³

Furthermore he stated that: "At the same time we must also admit that he is uncircumscribable, if indeed he is God made man, so that we may drive off the impious dog who babbles that Christ received his origin from Mary."¹⁰⁴ Finally, Saint Theodore said: "For this is the novel mystery of the dispensation that the divine and the human natures came together in the one hypostasis of the Word, which main-

¹⁰²Ibid. p. 22.

¹⁰³Docetics, perhaps including Manicheans and Paulicians; see Ouspensky, *Theology of the Icon*, p. 132; Roth, *Saint Theodore*, p. 23, note 11.

¹⁰⁴Perhaps Arius; see Roth, *Saint Theodore*, p. 23, note 12.

tains the properties of both natures of the indivisible union."¹⁰⁵

The Iconoclasts thought that a real image must be adequate in order to have the same essence as its original. So they asked the question: "What then, is it that is shown? Either the image of Christ or Christ himself, but not both, for the shadow and the truth are not the same thing. And how could one say that each is in the other, or that either one is in the other?"¹⁰⁶ Saint John Damascene answered those objections as follows:

An image is a likeness of the original with a certain difference for it is not an exact reproduction of the original . . . an image is a likeness and a representation of someone, containing in itself the person who is imaged. The icon is one, the prototype another; the difference is enormous between the cause and that which depends on it The icon, without doubt, is a likeness and image, and imprint of something. It shows what is represented on it and is not adequate to the prototype in everything; the represented person or object is one, but the representation is another.¹⁰⁷

Saint Theodore the Studite wrote on that question:

No one could ever be so insane so as to suppose that shadow and truth, nature and art, original and copy, cause and effect are the same in essence, or to say that "each is in the other, or either one is in the other. That is what one would have to say if he supposed or asserted that Christ and his image are the same in essence. On the contrary, we say that Christ is one thing and his image is another thing by nature, although they have an identity in the use of the same name. Moreover, when one considers the nature of the image, not only would he not say that the thing he sees is not Christ, but he would not even say that it is the image of Christ. For it is perhaps wood, or paint, or gold, or silver, or some one of the various materials . . . but when one considers the likeness to the original by means of a representation, it is both Christ and the image of Christ. It is Christ by the identity of name, but the image of Christ by its relationship. For the copy is a copy of its

¹⁰⁵Roth, *Saint Theodore*, p. 23.

¹⁰⁶*Ibid.* p. 31.

¹⁰⁷Allies, *Saint John Damascene, The Orthodox Faith* p. 10, 92; D. V. Dulgerov and I. K. Tsonevski, *Ouchebnik po Missionerstvo* (Sofia, 1937) p. 224.

original, just as a name is the name of that which is named. Here is the proof: It is written, "Joseph raised his eyes to the tomb of the man of God who had predicted these things. They he said, 'What is yonder monument I see?' And the men of the city told him, 'It is the man of God who came from Judah . . . ' and he said, 'Let him be; let no man move his bones.' " Do you understand what the Scripture says? It calls the tomb 'the man of God,' naming the monument after the body lying in it. How much more legitimate it is to name the prototype after its image! In another place, God says to Moses, 'Make for me two Cherubim of gold,' not 'images of Cherubim.' So now that you see how the copy is called like the original by identity of name, stop attempting folly and trying to use logic illogically against the truth.¹⁰⁸

Saint Photios addressed the issue of the various ways in which Christ is depicted by different nations. He says that the confession of the Iconoclasts about the use of icons on the part of the Romans, Indians, Greeks and Egyptians serves to indicate that the practice of using icons is a universal fact and consequently speaks of the correctness of their use in the universal Church. He then asks them two questions: one in connection with the Gospels, and another in connection with the sacred Cross, which they venerated. If the differences in the painting of the likeness of Christ gives them cause to denounce his icon, then should they not denounce the Gospels and the sacred Cross, when we know that the Gospels are written in different languages and with various letters, but the symbols on the sacred Cross have various forms? Saint Photios concludes that in the holy icons, holy Gospels, and the symbols of the sacred Cross, the contents and the deeper inner meaning are more important than the form and outer delineation.¹⁰⁹

The Icons of the Holy Theotokos, the Angels, and the Saints

The Iconoclasts also renounced the painting of the holy Theotokos, the holy angels, and all the saints. Saint John Damascene writes: "But the adversary says: make an image of Christ or of his Mother who bore him (Theotokos) and let that be sufficient. O, what folly this is! On your own showing you are absolutely against the saints . . . We depict Christ as our king and Lord and we do not deprive him of his army. The saints constitute the Lord's army. . . ."¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸Roth, *Saint Theodore*, pp. 31-32.

¹⁰⁹Yanopoulos, "Eikon," p. 386.

¹¹⁰Allies, *Saint John Damascene*, p. 20-24.

In the definition of the Iconoclastic council of 754, the participants recorded the reasons for which they abolished the icons of the saints. The Iconoclasts wrote:

We forbid the making of the icons of the all-pure, all-glorified one, who is indeed Theotokos, or of the prophets, apostles, and martyrs, who are mere men—not of two natures, divine and human in one hypostasis, as in the case of Christ. . . . We must say then, too, that since the former (that is, the icon of Christ) has been abolished, there is no need for the latter either. . . . Having no faith in the resurrection, it (paganism) invented a plaything worthy of itself in order to present, by means of mockery, something that does not exist. . . . for the saints who have pleased God and been honored by him with the dignity of sainthood live with God forever, even though they have departed from here. Thus, he who thinks to reinstate them on the poles, by means of a dead and accursed art which has never been alive but rather has been invented in vanity by adversary pagans, proves himself blasphemous. How do they also dare to depict through the vulgar art of the pagans the all-praised Mother of God . . . she who is higher than the heavens and holier than the Cherubim? Or again, those who will reign with Christ and sit along with him to judge the world . . . are they not ashamed to depict them through a pagan art? For it is not lawful for Christians, who place their hope in the resurrection, to use the customs of nations that worship demons, and to treat so spitefully, by means of worthless and dead matter, the saints who will be resplendent with such glory. . . .¹¹¹

In the same definition everyone was anathematized, who “endeavors to reinstate the effigies of the saints in inanimate and speechless icons made of material colors . . . and does not rather reproduce in himself their virtues through what has been written about them in books like animate icons, consequently to incite in himself the zeal to become like them. . . .”¹¹²

The definition of 815 stated that the Council of 787 “dogmatized the painting, by means of lifeless matter (of), the most-holy Mother of God and the holy imitators of the Word, and also heedlessly stated that lifeless portraits of the most holy Mother of God and the saints who shared in his (Christ’s) form should be set up and worshipped.”¹¹³

¹¹¹Sahas, *Icon*, pp. 100-05.

¹¹²Ibid. p. 161.

¹¹³Hefele-Leclercq, *Histoire* p. 1220; Mango, *The Art*, p. 168-69.

Saint Theodore formulated the position of the iconoclasts on this matter in the following way: The heretics say that it is not right to depict and to venerate the images of the saints. Why? Because they say it does not honor those who have obtained heavenly glory to represent them in material pictures. Instead let us keep their memorial in words, which is more valuable than that in paintings, because it is more useful."¹¹⁴

After the dogmatic permissibility of making icons of Christ was established, depicting the holy Mother of God and the saints was a logical consequence. That concept was dogmatically defended by the protectors of icon veneration. The unifying concept is that human nature is sanctified and glorified by the Incarnation of the Son of God. "In the Old Testament," wrote Saint John Damascene, "they did not erect temples in honor of the Israelites and they did not celebrate the memory of men, because human nature was under damnation and was condemned to death. But now after God was united without confusion with our essence, it became glorified and assumed immortality. Therefore we erect temples to the saints and we make images of them."¹¹⁵

The holy Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, in accordance with the Orthodox position stated in their dogmatic definition that it is appropriate to depict "the icons of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ, as well as our most pure, most blessed, and glorious Lady, Mother of God, and all the saints and holy men."¹¹⁶

Icon Veneration

The Iconoclasts abolished not only the making of icons in general, but they also abolished their honor and veneration. In the definition of the Iconoclastic Council of 754, the icons were called "inanimate and speechless,"¹¹⁷ "dead and accursed art,"¹¹⁸ "worthless and dead matter,"¹¹⁹ and "a mere act of a painter."¹²⁰ The council of 815 condemned the Seventh Ecumenical Council of lunacy, for daring to say that "they (the icons) are filled with the grace of God."¹²¹

To counterbalance the Iconoclasts, the Icon-venerators taught that the holy icons are useful, that they are didactic and mystagogical means which led the Christians towards religious enlightenment to

¹¹⁴Roth, *Saint Theodore*, p. 37.

¹¹⁵D. V. Dulgerov and I. K. Tsonevski, *Ouchebnik po Missionerstvo*, pp. 224-25.

¹¹⁶Cavarnos, *Iconography*, p. 53.

¹¹⁷Sahas, *Icon*, p. 116.

¹¹⁸Ibid. p. 103.

¹¹⁹Ibid. p. 105.

¹²⁰Mansi, *Collectio Conciliorum* 13.268-69D.

¹²¹Hefele-Leclercq, *Histoire*, p. 1220; Mango, *The Art* p. 169.

remember, honor, and venerate the prototypes. Thus according to them, the icons are the means of passing on blessing and sanctification. By means of the icons the Christians are united with their prototypes and become participants in their divine holiness. The one painted, though lacking in the icon in essence, is present in it by grace and energy. The divine energy, in which the one painted participates, is present in his icon and mystically unites the believers who venerate it with him and through him with God, who is the only reason for the holiness of the one painted and his icon."¹²²

Saint John Damascene wrote: "I worship the image of Christ as the incarnate God; that of the Theotokos, mother of us all, as the Mother of God's Son; that of the saints as friends of God."¹²³ He also said: "It is no matter which I adore; it is the Lord of matter . . . I honor it (the icon) not as God, but as a channel of divine energy and grace."¹²⁴

In the second session of the Seventh Ecumenical Council the letter of Pope Adrian to Patriarch Tarasios was read, in which among other things the Pope wrote: "We venerate them (the icons) with a relative cult . . . but we reserve only for God our adoration and our faith."¹²⁵

In the fourth session of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, a dogmatic decree was signed in which, among other things, it was said: "We receive, salute, and kiss the holy and venerable icons, according to the ancient tradition of the holy, universal church of God, and our holy fathers, who both received them and determined that they should be in all the most holy churches of God, and in every place in his dominion. To these holy and venerable icons, as we have said, we give honor (τιμῶμεν) and salutation and honorable reverence (τιμητικῶς προσκυνούμεν), namely, the icon of the incarnation of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, and of our immaculate Lady and all-holy Theotokos, of whom he was pleased to become incarnate, that he might save us and deliver us from every impious madness after idols; all of the incorporeal angels—since they appeared to the righteous in the form of men; also the forms and icons of the divine and most famed apostles, the prophets, who speak of God, the victorious martyrs, and the other saints, in order that by their paintings we may be enabled to rise to the remembrance and memory of the prototype and may partake in some measure of sanctification."¹²⁶

¹²²Yanopoulos, "Eikon," pp. 394-97.

¹²³Allies, *Saint John Damascene, The Orthodox Faith*, pp. 20-21.

¹²⁴Ibid. pp. 72-73.

¹²⁵Hefele-Leclercq, *Histoire*, p. 763.

¹²⁶Cavarnos, *Iconography*, pp. 52-53.

Saint Theodore the Studite emphasized that through the icon, the Gospels, the Cross or other sacred object, we serve God "in spirit and in truth" (Jn 4.24). The error of the Iconoclasts is that their mind remains with the material things, whereas for the Christians "the mind, through the materials, ascends toward the prototypes: that is the faith of the Orthodox."¹²⁷

When we dwell on the fact that the Iconoclasts reject the right to depict the icons of the saints and to venerate them, Saint Theodore says that, "The heretics say the same to repeat their arguments, because the hearing is equal to sight, and it is necessary to use both senses. Whoever takes away the one would have to remove the other along with it. And by removing both he would be quite able to abolish the veneration of every venerable person." "But," the heretics say "not everyone who is depicted is worthy of veneration," to which Saint Theodore replied: "But we have saints who are venerable and glorious; because they have earned honor by the blood of martyrdom or by a holy way of life."¹²⁸

Saint Photios reckons that what is most important in the icons is their ability to lead the believers toward the prototype. That according to him takes place through the inscription on the icon, that is, the name inscribed on it of the one painted. The inscription connects the icon and prototype.¹²⁹

Knowing the position of the Icon-venerators, the Iconoclasts asked: "Is the inscription to be venerated or the icon, of which the title is inscribed?" Saint Theodore replies: "That is rather like asking: is it right to venerate the gospel book or the title on it? The representation of the cross or the inscription on it? I might add also in the case of our own kind, the man or his name? . . . What is there, of all the things before our eyes, that is nameless? How can the thing which is named be separated in honor from its own appellation, so that we may offer veneration to the one and deprive the other of it?"¹³⁰

In accordance with all that has been stated concerning the faith of the Church, the Fathers at the Seventh Ecumenical Council, after enumerating the persons whose icons can be made, stated:

for the more continually they are seen in icon form, the more are the beholders lifted up to the memory of the prototypes

¹²⁷Roth, *Saint Theodore*, p. 34.

¹²⁸Ibid. pp. 37-38.

¹²⁹Yanopoulos, "Eikon" p. 390.

¹³⁰Roth, *Saint Theodore*, p. 23.

and to an aspiration after them, . . . to honor with kissing and honorable reverence, not indeed the true worship (λατρεία) of faith, which pertains to the divine nature alone. But in the same way as to the form of the precious and life-giving Cross and to the holy book of the Gospels and to the rest of the sacred objects, so to these shall be offered incense and lights, in honor of them according to the ancient pious custom. For the honor which is paid to the icon passes on to that which the icon represents, and he who reveres the icon reveres the person who is represented.¹³¹

That exhausts the scope of the definitions of the Seventh Ecumenical Council. In conclusion of the above written, we shall say: In our times, when the icon for the Protestants is an idol, for most of the Catholics "a book for the illiterate,"¹³² for many nominal Orthodox a modern decoration for their secularized homes, and for many Orthodox countries which inherited the old icon, a tourist attraction, the Seventh Ecumenical Council is a new revelation for the entire Christian world.

It discloses that icon veneration is not a secondary confessional form, but a dogma of the Faith, proceeding from the fundamental dogma of the Incarnation of the second Person of the Holy Trinity — the word of God, and that the abolishment of the icon from the religious liturgical life of Christianity is the worst of the known heresies, "for it degrades the dispensation (that is, the Incarnation) of the Savior," as John, one of the representatives of the Eastern patriarchates, correctly declared at the Seventh Ecumenical Council.¹³³

The Council shows us that the icon is equivalent and of equal power to the holy Gospels and that where we have "over-satiation" of formal and poor quality preaching, the great interest toward the old icon can be used so as to pass on more successfully Christ's good news and the Orthodox Church tradition.

The Council has convinced us that the value of the icon is not in its material and artistic worth but in its ability to mystically lift the believer to its prototype, to make us participants in its blessing and holiness, and through it to connect us with the source of grace and divine energy, God himself. Consequently, the icon can be for the contemporary "earthly" man, a window toward the broad horizons of the heavenly, spiritual and divine realities, to return the heaven

¹³¹Cavarnos, *Iconography*, pp. 53-54.

¹³²Ouspensky, *Theology of the Icon*, pp. 133-34; see Roth, *Saint Theodore*, p. 34, note 38.

¹³³Hefele-Leclercq, *Histoire* p. 762.

above the earth, the sacredness of life, the salvation of man and the world from more persistent and more senseless preparation of world catastrophe.

It has given us instruction for the methods, the simplicity and the daring through which the holy Orthodox Church, must today set up for examination and resolution of all the dogmatic, disciplinary, and parochial problems which emerge within its bosom or within interchurch borders, regardless of their complexity confessional conservatism and state utilitarian tendencies and limits impeding the Church's religious life now and in the future.

In this theological perspective we see the Seventh Ecumenical Council, whose twelfth century jubilee God designed us to celebrate fraternally in the blessed shadow of the venerable and life-giving Cross of the Lord at Hellenic College and Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology and under the auspices of our beloved hosts, whom we offer our heartfelt thanks.

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The Iconoclastic Controversy— Historical Perspectives

METROPOLITAN JOSEPH BOSSAKOV

IT HAS BEEN TWELVE HUNDRED YEARS AGO THIS YEAR SINCE the Second Nicaean/Seventh Ecumenical Council at which, following a struggle of many years, the truth had triumphed concerning the veneration of the sacred images in the Christian Church. The Council's decisions about the veneration of the holy icons and the holy Cross had greatly contributed to the consolidation of Christendom and to the development of a sound Christian teaching and tradition. Today the Orthodox world marks in a proper manner this remarkable anniversary. Numerous inter-church conferences, meetings, and consultations are devoted to this council, and representatives of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church are taking an active part with scientific and theological contributions of their own.¹

The Third International Conference of Orthodox Theological Schools held at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, Massachusetts, from August 29 through September 4, is one of these memorable events of 1987 which is dedicated as "The Year of the Icon."

As a representative of Saint Clement Ochaldsky Theological Academy of Sofia, Bulgaria, I am pleased with the blessing of His Beatitude Patriarch Maximos of Bulgaria to participate in this conference.

After having confirmed the decisions of the Councils in Nicaea, Constantinople, Ephesos, Chalcedon, and Constantinople, the Sixth

¹Patriarch Maximos, "Message to the Participants in the Twelfth Convention of the Diocese of Akron" (Akron, 1987).

Ecumenical Council further illuminated and revealed the dogma of Jesus Christ as God and man. This memorable ecumenical council pronounced the end of the christological heresies and the numerous compromises toward monophysitism, rejected the heretical assertion of a single will and single activity in Christ, and opened the road for the regulation and development of the practical church life.

The first question of a practical nature refers to the place, the worthiness, the forms of use, and the meaning of the icon in the everyday and liturgical life of Christians. The icons, which came to be known during the earthly life of Christ and his apostles, became part of the liturgical life of the ancient Christians. However, they met with the counterreaction of those who were against any religious depictions.

The origins of iconoclasm originate with the early sects which refused to accept the teachings of the Council of Nicaea in 325. To them, the Church was a mere creature which was adopted by God. The principle of their theology was that there is a conflict between matter and spirit: the first is evil, the second good. Therefore, the Incarnation was not understandable to them. They rejected the sacraments and all external ceremonies and forms in favor of a strictly internal religion. For them, the waters of baptism were just bath water; the Cross, an accursed instrument; the Church, an invisible and spiritual body only. These basic tenets promulgated through the centuries were used in the campaign against icons.²

When the Moslems found themselves in the majority, they pressured the Christians who venerated icons to destroy them. There were also groups of heretics who thought that all material things were evil, and they too put pressure on the Orthodox Christians to abandon the veneration of icons.

In the seventh century a heresy called Paulicianism came to the forefront in Armenia and other eastern provinces of the Roman Empire. It was from here that Emperor Leo III the Isaurian came. He, too, was mistaken in his theological views on the Incarnation and was anxious to rid the Church of "materialism." He also had political reasons for wishing to suppress the veneration of the icons in that he sought to employ the heretical eastern provinces to support the empire, and at the same time he hoped to pacify the Moslem and Jewish elements within the empire. To these reasons was added the disdain he had for Hellenism and Greek culture. The accusation that the Fathers of the Church had changed Christianity into a Greek philosophy was rabidly supported by many of the non-Greek peoples. To these persons, the icon was a resurrection of the pantheism of

²Nathaniel, *Holy Icons* (1969) p. 20.

the ancient Greeks.³ Others say that Leo III wanted to free the people from the influence of the Church and to take education away from the control of the clergy. Thus, he was the first to rise against the already established Church cult of the veneration of icons and thus became the leading person around whom the iconoclasts within Byzantine society gathered.

In 726 and 730 he proclaimed two decrees against the veneration of the icon. The patriarch Germanos (715-730) categorically refused to sign the imperial decree. He announced to the emperor that he would not tolerate any change in the teaching of the faith without an ecumenical council. He also wrote three dogmatic epistles to the iconoclastic bishops. As a result of his firm stand against iconoclasm he suffered much humiliation. He was deposed, deported, and replaced by an iconoclast, Patriarch Anastasios (730-753). After the decree was signed by the new patriarch, icons began to be destroyed everywhere. The icon of the Savior which had long been above the gate of the imperial palace was removed first and a cross erected in its stead. A plaque with an explanation read: "The emperor cannot endure that Christ should be represented as a mute and lifeless form graven on earthly materials. Thus, Leo and his young son, Constantine V, here at the gates engraved the thrice-blessed representation of the cross, the glory of believing monarchs." The image of Christ was no longer stamped on the coins of the empire. It was replaced with an imperial personage. It was not that there was an objection to art or images as such, but only to those of a religious nature.⁴

It may be that there were worthy men who had genuine anxieties lest the people fall into superstition. There were even cases when the supporters of icons exaggerated their veneration and led some away from true respect towards the holy images. It was a time for clarifying the theology of icons.⁵

Immediately after the imperial decree, Saint John of Damascus (675-749) responded with three treatises entitled "In the Defence of Holy Icons," in which he not only responds to the iconoclastic theory, but also presents a complete and systematic theological exposition of the Orthodox teaching on the image.⁶

Saint Gregory II, the pope of Rome, like Saint Germanos the patriarch, also refused to submit to the emperor. In 727 he called

³Nathaniel, *Holy Icons*, (1969) p. 20.

⁴Leonid Ouspensky, *Theology of the Icon* (Crestwood, 1978) p. 135.

⁵Nathaniel, *Holy Icons*, pp. 20-21.

⁶Leonid Ouspensky, *Theology*, p. 137.

together a council which confirmed the veneration of icons. He wrote the letters to the emperor and the patriarch, which were later read at the Seventh Ecumenical Council. In 731 his successor, Gregory III, a Greek from Syria, called together a new council in Rome, where it was decided that "In the future, whoever removes, destroys, dishonors, or insults the images of the Savior, his holy Mother . . . or the Apostles . . . will not receive the body and blood of the Savior and will be excluded from the Church."⁷

The struggle for and against icons which raged both in the East and the West was primarily concentrated in the Church of Constantinople. The son of Leo III, Constantine Kopronymos (741-755), whom some Protestants consider to be a spiritual ancestor of Luther and Calvin, became the chief proponent of iconoclastic theology. He was an even more despotic, brutal, and fanatic iconoclast than his father. The three patriarchs who followed one another on the seat of Constantinople during his reign were completely dependent upon him. Constantine wrote a treatise in which he summarized the iconoclastic doctrine and called together a council at Hieria in 754. While the council was in session, from February 10 to August 8, the persecution of the monasteries which had begun earlier continued with increased ardor. The monks, those "idolaters and worshippers of the shadows," as Constantine Kopronymos called them, whose estimated number in the Empire was one hundred thousand,⁸ were given three choices if they continued to venerate icons: marriage, military duty, or martyrdom. Their heads were shattered against icons; they were sewn into sacks and drowned; they were forced to break their monastic vows, and the hands of the iconographers were burned. The monks emigrated in groups, particularly to Italy, Cyprus, Syria, and Palestine. According to some historians, Italy alone received fifty thousand of these monks during the time of Leo III and Constantine Kopronymos.⁹ Many of them were iconographers, which is why the city of Rome never produced more works of sacred art than during the iconoclastic epoch. All the popes who succeeded one another during the reign of Constantine Kopronymos, Zacharias, Stephen II, Paul I, Stephen III, and Hadrian I, remained firm in the Orthodox faith and continued the work of their predecessors in decorating the churches with icons with the help of monk iconographers who had

⁷Hefele, *Histoire des Conciles* (Paris, 1910), 3/4, p. 677; Leonid Ouspensky, p. 138.

⁸Leonid Ouspensky, *Theology* p. 138.

⁹German Andraev, *Tarasii, Patriarkhi Konstantinopolskie* (Sergiev Posad, 1907) p. 79.

emigrated from the eastern part of the Empire.¹⁰ One monastery in Constantinople remained above the disturbances through the courage and wisdom of its abbot, Saint Theodore of Studios. Under Saint Theodore, the Orthodox teaching and veneration of the holy images was maintained in this monastery and through him and the monks with him, it continued to be a beacon for those who upheld the true veneration.

With the death of Constantine Kopronymos, the persecutions became less violent. His son, Leo IV, was a rather indifferent iconoclast. At his death in 780, his wife Irene came to the throne with her underaged son, Constantine. Being an Orthodox Christian, she immediately began restoring Orthodoxy in the empire. The Orthodox candidate to the patriarchal throne was Tarasios (784-806). Under his influence the empress began to prepare for the Seventh Ecumenical Council, which was called together in Nicaea in 787. Three hundred and fifty bishops and many monks participated. An imperial decree was pronounced and an address was given by Patriarch Tarasios. In it the patriarch said that iconoclasts were inspired by Jesus, Saracens, Samaritans, Manichaeans, and two Monophysite sects, the Phantasiasts and the Theopaschites. The heretics were then invited to present their doctrine, which was refuted point by point. The council reestablished the veneration of icons and relics and took a series of steps to reestablish normal life in the Church. In the condemnation which the Fathers of the council pronounced against iconoclasm it is stated that: "This heresy, both in its opinions and its practices, recapitulates all of the errors and heresies of the past."¹¹ The Council also stated that the images depicted on stone or wood are lawful in the eyes of the Church. The painting of icons is a part of the tradition of the Church and cannot be attributed to the initiation of artists. The icon is to be venerated and honored, but not worshiped. Worship is reserved to him who is the subject of the faith: God alone. There is nothing inherent in the wood or stone which is honored. It is rather the person represented who is revered through the image represented.

Upon completion of the council on October 23, 787, the participants returned to their dioceses with the hope that they had secured peace in the Church the final restoration of the veneration of the icon. However, soon afterwards the iconoclasts again emerged and a new generation of iconoclastic emperors, Leo V the Armenian (813-820), Michael II (821), and Theophilos (822-848), disturbed the

¹⁰Ouspensky, *Theology*, p. 140.

¹¹Ibid. p. 133.

life of the Church for three more decades. However, lacking the enthusiasm and audacity of the emperors, the iconoclasts ended their historical existence in the year 843. After ascending the throne, Empress Theodora, convened a Church Council on March 11, 843, in Constantinople, under Patriarch Methodios (842-846). The council reestablished the veneration of the icons, excommunicated the iconoclasts and decreed that this victory be commemorated every year on the first Sunday of the Great Lent, with the exaltation of icons in all the churches.

The main reason for the final success of icon veneration was the dogmatical formulation of the Seventh Ecumenical Council. Without question, it had all the signs of true catholicity, withstood the iconoclastic heresy, established itself as a basic rule of the Christian life in the East, and remained forever a pillar of Orthodoxy.

The foremost meaning of the Nicaean formulation concerning icon veneration is fortified by the fact that it clearly has connection with the formulations of the previous ecumenical councils. Therefore, after proceeding from the dogma of the ecumenical council in Chalcedon concerning two unconfused, united, inconvertible, indivisible, inseparable natures in Christ, the Seventh Ecumenical Council properly concluded that the depiction of God the logos is possible and necessary, in order to prove the true incarnation. After carrying the theoretical conclusions of the Council of Chalcedon into practical church life, the Seventh Ecumenical Council closed the cycle of problems that necessitated the convening of the ecumenical councils.

Becoming in the meantime the main target of Islamic expansion, the eastern people faced one main challenge — the preservation of their Christian faith from the encroachment by Islam. During the centuries of difficult Turkish subjugation, the conquered Christians had and kept as the guiding rule of faith only the decisions of the seven ecumenical councils. Owing to these strongholds of holy Orthodoxy, the eastern people preserved their national and Church individuality and many of them succeeded in freeing themselves from the Turkish yoke. Convinced that only catholicity, as it was bequeathed by the Savior and the apostles, is the true form of God-pleasing and democratic government, the heads of the local and autocephalous Orthodox churches even now synodically govern and direct the future of their flocks, and are earnestly preparing for a convening of a Pan-Orthodox council as a supreme organ of the legislative authority of the Church. The conveying of this council is important. However, if it does not materialize and in the meantime, should the Bridegroom come, the Eastern Orthodox churches will meet him, like the wise virgins of the parable (Mt 25.1-13), with lamps filled with the oil from

the inexhaustible spiritual wealth of the seven ecumenical councils, the strength and guarantee of Orthodoxy and will enter with him and take part in the marriage feast.¹²

For us, the faithful of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, the Seventh Ecumenical Council has great meaning. It occurred immediately prior to the baptizing of the Bulgarian nation in 865. All these struggles and experiences had some effect upon the Christians of our lands. You all know that the Bulgarian Orthodox Church is the first spiritual daughter of the church of Constantinople. The patriarch Saint Photios (810-895), whom the Bulgarian Orthodox Church venerates as one of her own native saints, baptized the tsar Boris the Baptizer of our nation.¹³ We are very grateful to our heavenly Father that we received holy Orthodoxy in its fullness from the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. Therefore, having the privilege to receive the already established decisions of the ecumenical councils, we dedicated ourselves more to the practical side of the life of Orthodox Christians. The holy icons have a very important place in our church life. Iconoclasm greatly disturbed church life during the eight and ninth centuries in the East as well as in the West. It brought disturbance to the souls of those who were still not strong in the faith. It took away the lives of many dedicated fighters and courageous confessors of the truth. However, on the positive side it gave an impulse to the development of Orthodox theology.

The holy and Equal-to-the-Apostles, Enlighteners of the Slav-Bulgarians, Saints Cyril and Methodios were tireless and zealous defenders of the Orthodox faith, upholders and strong promoters of the Slavic spirit. They were contemporaries of iconoclasm in its last days, when the sociological, economic, and political arguments for this heresy were finally exhausted. Only arguments of a religious nature remained, but even these were dulled to a great degree because zealous defenders of the icons such as Patriarch Germanos of Constantinople, Saint John of Damascus, the Popes Gregory II and Gregory III, Saint Theodore of Studios, and others had revealed the true theological basis for icon veneration and very convincingly proved that it is not idolatry.

Even as a student of the School of Magnara, Saint Constantine (Cyril) the Philosopher, under the influence of his famous teacher, Saint Photios, who later became patriarch of Constantinople, developed a negative attitude in respect to the already declining iconoclastic heresy. Many times together with his brother Saint Methodios, he defended the truth concerning of the place and meaning

¹²*Tserkoven Vestnik*, 23 (1985) 3.

¹³*The Biographies of the Bulgarian Saints* (Sofia, 1974) 1, p. 85.

of the holy icons in the life of Christians. This he did with great philosophical flair and correct theological form. In 847 Saint Constantine-Cyril the Philosopher had a dispute with the deposed iconoclastic Patriarch John the Grammarian (837-842) about the holy icons, and he achieved great success. To the question asked by John the Grammarian: "Tell me, young man, why don't we venerate and kiss the cross, when it is broken, and you are not ashamed to venerate an icon even when it is painted up to the chest?" To this the philosopher answered: "The cross has four sides and if one of them is missing, it loses its image, but the icon shows the image and the likeness only with the face of the one who is depicted and painted. When one looks at an icon, he does not see the face of a lion, nor a mountain cat, he sees the image of the person depicted on it." To the question: "Why do we venerate a cross without any inscription on it, when there are other crosses, and yet we do not venerate an icon without the name of the person depicted on it?" Saint Cyril responded: "It is because every cross has the likeness of the cross of Christ but all the icons do not depict the same image." This means that looking at an icon with a name we direct our thoughts to the person who is depicted on it. If the icon has no name, we do not know whom we venerate.

During the mission of the holy brothers to the Khazars, Saint Constantine-Cyril had a dispute with the local Jews concerning idolatry. Using the Old Testament, Saint Constantine-Cyril the Philosopher, with the same great ability, again convincingly proved that the venerated icons do see a difference between an idol and an icon. They only pay honorary adoration but not worship, which is due to God alone.

"How can you venerate, and bow down to idols and yet consider yourself pleasing to God?" the Jews asked him. The philosopher replied: "First of all, you must learn to differentiate between an icon and an idol, because in your language there are several words having the same meaning. Don't accuse the Christians too quickly! I would like also to ask you: "Did not Moses build the portable tabernacle according to the directions received from God? (Ex 26.30). Did not he according to the instruction make a cherubim, using wood, animal skin, and wool? And just because he made it so, can we say that you have venerated and bowed down in worship before the wood, the skin, and the wool, and not God himself? The same thing we may say about the Temple of Solomon, on which we find the depiction of cherubims, angels, and others (2 Chr 2 and 3). So, we the Christians make images of God's righteous man, but we differentiate between images of Saints and images of demons."¹⁴

¹⁴Ibid. p. 66.

The perspective of the brothers of Thessalonike concerning the place and meaning of the holy icons was revealed in its totality in their catechetical formula, "Writing about the True Faith," which Saint Constantine read on behalf of himself and his brother, Saint Methodios, to Pope Adrian II in Rome in 868. Even though written in a sketchy form, as it is with every creed, in it we find thoughts which reflect the Orthodox teaching about icons. Here again, as in their dispute with the Jews, the difference between veneration of the person on the icon and true worship due God alone is very strongly emphasized. First, veneration is given to icons depicting the Lord Jesus Christ, then to those of the holy Mother of God, then to the angels, the apostles, the martyrs, and all the other saints.

The point of view of the holy brothers concerning the veneration of icons is very eloquent proof of their upright and unchanging true faith, their profound correct thinking, their moral purity, and their devotion and sacrifice to the truth.¹⁵ This was reason enough for Pope Adrian to decree that Saint Constantine be buried in the sanctuary of Saint Clement in Rome after his death on February 14, 869, to make an image of him at the grave, and to burn a votive light day and night for the glory of God who eulogizes those who praise him.¹⁶

According to the biography of Tsar Boris-Michael, the Baptizer of the Bulgarians, the Byzantine Emperor Basil the Macedonian beseeched Saint Methodios to come from Moravia to Constantinople in order to meet this holy man and to ask for his prayer while he was still in this world. Saint Methodios passed through the newly-baptized Bulgaria on his way from Constantinople in 882 and met Saint Boris. According to the words of the venerable Theophilos of Ochrid, he showered him with verbal kindness. Symeon Logothetes and other Greek historians mention that someone with the name Methodios had been asked by Saint Boris to paint a picture on the wall in his house depicting a dreadful scene, and that he painted the picture of the Second Coming of Christ.¹⁷

On the occasion of eleven hundredth anniversary of the return of the disciples of Saints Cyril and Methodios to Bulgaria, it was mentioned many times that the first among them, Saint Clement of Ochrid, in the capacity as the first Bulgarian bishop, gave the Bulgarian Church many hymns, and "he has given to us — the Bulgarians — everything pertaining to the Church in which the name of God and

¹⁵*Tserkoven Vestnik*, 15 (1986) 4.

¹⁶*Biographies*, p. 74.

¹⁷*Ibid.* p. 84.

his saints are praised and which touches the souls.”¹⁸

Becoming a part of the church life of the Bulgarians, the holy icons were also God’s power and dear holy image, always kept in their hearts during the difficult times of the Turkish yoke. In the biography of Saint Nikolas of Sofia, it is said that during his tortures he bravely confessed Christ, exposed the Mohammedan heresy, and at the same hour, moved by the Holy Spirit, he reached into his bosom, took out the icon of the Lord Jesus Christ, crossed himself, devoutly kissed the image of Christ and with great emotion in his voice said: “Whosoever does not believe in the Lord God and our Savior Jesus Christ, and his pure Mother, and whosoever does not venerate their images let him be anathematized,” and with his finger he pointed the icon to the unbelievers.¹⁹

The same holy zeal manifested in honoring and keeping the icon, this blessed sanctuary of the Bulgarian spirit and artistic creative genius is recreated even by the writer Yordan Yovkov in his novel “The Farm by the Border.” The description of Yovkov is whispered by the Gospel’s depiction of Christ in the wheat field. In Yovkov’s icon, “painted by the iconographer Nedko,” the Lord Jesus Christ is in the midst of the wheat fields in Dobrudja — the grainery of Bulgaria, blessing with both hands the bread of the people, grown in this land.²⁰

“But let us remember: great spiritual uplifting and creative thought, especially religious thought, are always forgotten in the suffering of peoples and in great trials . . . In the midst of torments the discovery of the icon comes at the right time.”²¹ Consequently, we the Bulgarians, have needed these glad tidings of spring and the red of dawn that heralds the joy of sunrise. We have needed to carry before us the banner upon which the beauty of heaven is joined with the sunny visage of glorified Bulgaria. The Archangel Michael, for example, who is depicted slaying the dragon, symbolically represents the resistance of the people and their will for victory over the foreign subjugator. The national revival in Bulgaria during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with its abundance of icons very clearly attests to the people’s resistance. At that time the icon was also venerated as a means of preserving the national conscience. That is why Bulgaria has such a rich tradition of iconography.

¹⁸Alexander Milev, *The Greek Biographies of Saint Clement of Ochrid* (Sofia, 1966) pp. 132-33.

¹⁹*Biographies*, p. 103.

²⁰*Tserkoven Vestnik*, 27 (1985) 2.

²¹Eugene N. Trubetskoi, *Icons: Theology in Color* (Crestwood, 1973) p. 69.

Bulgarian icons are connected to the religious life of the people. However, the careful eye will discover in them features of everyday life. For instance, in the icon of the Last Supper in the church of Boyana one can see a head of garlic. Some of the Bulgarian saints are depicted in their national costumes which make it more interesting. Today, Bulgaria is indeed a great gallery of holy icons, especially in the churches of Boyana (1259), Saint George at Sofia (fourteenth century), Kalotine (late fifteenth century), Dragalevci (1475), and Arbanassi (1681).²²

Bulgarian Christian art, iconography, and other selected items may be seen in many art exhibits all over the world. All this is a very valuable heritage for the Church and for the people. It speaks of our past, it warms our present and elevates our souls, grants spiritual peace and joy, and unites us with God. That is why we value and preserve it, and that is why we commemorate with such honor the Seventh Ecumenical Council—pillar and affirmation of the veneration of icons. That is why every year the Bulgarian Orthodox Church celebrates the memory of the Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council on the fourth Sunday after the Elevation of the Holy Cross. That is why the admiration for these holy fathers and all icon lovers, who foresaw through the influence of the Holy Spirit the tremendous spiritual benefits of iconography, is nationwide and from the depth of our hearts. In fulfillment of their legacy iconographic schools such as Triavna, Samokov, and Bansko-Raslog emerged whose works of art adorn not only the churches in Bulgaria, but also churches all over the world. These few examples of the rich ecclesiastical experiences of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church testify to the depth of the veneration of the icons in the lives of the Bulgarian people.

It is no secret that today, the holy icon is also a blessed tool in the missionary work of the Orthodox Church, not only among the Orthodox but also among non-Orthodox Christians and to those who belong to non-Christian faiths, and even to those who are non-religious. The Roman Catholic theologian, Professor Ernst Sutner, develops the following thoughts concerning the holy icons:

The churches of the West and particularly the Roman Catholic Church should avail themselves to the opportunity of the spiritual wealth of the Eastern churches, i.e., Orthodoxy, especially when one contemplates upon the icons . . . The Orthodox Churches possess an unbroken iconographic tradition, which can express the symbols and make them understandable for all. A person who stands before an icon does not have to

²²Constantine Cavarinos, *Orthodox Iconography*, (1977) p. 17.

decipher its mystery in order to comprehend its meaning. On the other hand he does not find himself before a naturalistic painting, in which the supernatural and realistic of this world are mixed together.²³

Today the icon is being studied by many lay people: scientists, literary men, and intellectuals. We believe and honor it as a holy item, a necessary relic for liturgical use in the church. The icon helps the faithful by stimulating good behavior and devotion. Historically it is a visible reflection of Christianity as an idea. We believe that its first appearance is connected with our Lord Jesus Christ, as the historian Bishop Eusebios of Caesarea, 265-340, attests.²⁴ We also believe that the first Christian iconographer was the holy Apostle and Evangelist Luke, and the catacombs preserved the first Christian icons. We believe that Saint Basil the Great (330-379) said in his homily on the martyrdom of Barlaam: "Arise now before me, you iconographers of the deeds of the saint . . . Let me look at the fighter most vividly depicted in your icon."²⁵ We believe that Saint John Chrysostom (347-407) had had an icon of the Apostle Paul before him as he studied Paul's epistles. And Saint Gregory of Nyssa (330-395) also tells us how deeply he was moved by an icon of the sacrifice of Isaac.²⁶

Even the psychologists claim that the icon is a most complicated and great miracle, a priceless source of admiration, moral exaltation, and profound reflections. The iconographer creates an icon with which he attacks the eyes of the onlooker, carries him into the realm of the Supreme Being God, brings him closer to the saints, detaches him from earthly sinfulness, elevates him into heavenly purity, influences him in his quest and service to humanity to be God-like, and makes him refined. Thus the words of Fyodor Dostoyevsky come true, "Beauty will save the world."

Historians also claim that no other art is so directly dedicated to the human person as iconography is. It has helped in the gradual refinement of both man and the world throughout the centuries. The Church iconographer translates the heavenly into a comprehensible earthly language. The style and variety of subjects are proof of that. The iconographer gives the invisible a fascinating visible form and

²³*Episkepsis* 147 (May 15, 1976); *Tsarkoven Vestnik*, 7 (1977) p. 6.

²⁴Leonid Ouspensky and Vladimir Lossky, *The Meaning of Icons* (New York, 1983) p. 25.

²⁵PG 31.489 A-C; C. Cavarnos, *Iconography*, p. 13.

²⁶*Ibid.*, p. 14.

vividly expresses that which is otherwise inexpressible: ideal, symbol, virtue, sin. In a visible form the iconographer expresses mankind's quest and longing for God. Hence, if the statement of Vladimir Soloviev is true, that "Art is prophecy," then it is especially true for iconographic art, because the icon depicts man and the world as they have to be, can be, and eventually will be. The genius of the iconographer introduces the soul to the lost paradise and for a moment nurtures our sweet hope that it is also up to us to convert this fleeting spiritual paradise into a permanent abode.²⁷

So, what more can we say about our historical perspective if we have an iconoclastic controversy in the future?

1. Like the fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, we are obliged to "retain without introducing anything new, all the ecclesiastical traditions, written or unwritten, which have been established for us." And for "those who dare to think or teach differently, following the example of the evil heretics; those who dare to scorn the ecclesiastical traditions, to make innovations, or to repudiate something which has been sanctified by the Church, whether the Gospel or the representation of the Cross, or the painting of icons, or the sacred relics of martyrs, or who have evil, pernicious and subversive feelings towards the traditions of the Catholic Church; those, finally, who dare to give sacred vases or venerable monasteries to ordinary uses," there is a conciliar decision: "If they are bishops, they are to be defrocked; if they are monks or laymen, they are to be excommunicated,"²⁸ because only by living in tradition can we say: "It has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us" (Acts 15.28).²⁹

2) The *Synodikon* of the Triumph of Orthodoxy contains a series of anathemas against the heretical iconoclasts and a series of proclamations of eternal memory for the confessors of Orthodoxy. Among others, paragraph three proclaims eternal memory "to those who believe and who substantiate their words with writings and their deeds with representations, for the propagation and affirmation of the truth by word and images."³⁰

3) The *Kontakion* of the Triumph of Orthodoxy ends "We confess and proclaim our salvation in word and images." It means that

²⁷*Tsarkoven Vestnik*, Vol. 27, (1985) p. 3.

²⁸Mansi, *Collectio Conciliorum* 13.377-80; Ouspensky, *Theology*, pp. 160-61.

²⁹*Ibid.* p. 162.

³⁰*Ibid.* p. 193.

that man can transform himself by an internal effort and make of himself a living icon of Christ. That is why the icon indicates man's participation in the divine life.

4) Having been given the teachings of the Holy Fathers we are obliged to be confessors of faith and apologists for the veneration of icons.

5) Concerning the icons in the museums throughout the world, we must remember the words of Saint John of Damascus, that "The image of Christ is Christ, and the image of a saint is that saint. The power is not split asunder, the glory is not divided, but the glory becomes the attribute of him who is depicted."³¹

6) Through the icon, as through the Holy Scriptures, we not only learn about God, but we also know God.

7) Every Orthodox iconographer, living in the tradition, can make genuine icons. "The Church has repeatedly emphasized the necessity to follow the tradition, either through rulings of councils, or through the voice of its dignitaries, and enjoined that icons should be painted as the ancient holy iconographers painted them." "Portray in colors according to the tradition," says Saint Symeon of Thessalonike; "this is painting as true as what is written in books and the grace of God rests on it, for what is portrayed is holy."³²

8. It is a fact that the symbolical language of the Church has not always been understood. This misunderstanding has often led to the absurd. Our responsibility is to defend traditional Orthodox art and to argue against every possible innovation.

9. The iconoclastic ban on icons interrupted the development of iconography in Byzantium for more than a century (726-843) and caused a large-scale destruction of icons in the Empire. We must remember this evil of the iconoclastic controversy. Speaking about the Great Church of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople some years after the end of iconoclasm, the ecumenical patriarch Photios (810-895) remarked that "this celebrated and sacred church looked sad with its visual mysteries scraped off, as it were . . ."³³ It is a disgrace of holy Orthodoxy, and we must pray for her rehabilitation.

10. Today we live in a time of deep spiritual crisis and secularization of religious consciousness. We praise the past; it is our heritage. We approve the present; it is our responsibility. What would we say about the future? It is our challenge. The twenty-first century is just around the corner. It is possible to break the link with tradition.

³¹Ouspensky and Lossky, *Meaning*, p. 32.

³²Ibid. p. 42.

³³Cavarnos, *Iconography*, p. 15.

Church art is becoming secularized under the influence of the nascent secular realistic art. This secularization is a reflection of the general secularization of the life of the church. The result is a mixing of Church image and worldly image, of Church and world. But spiritual reality demands preserving truth from the distortion of historical reality as well. It would be wrong to think that the twenty-first century will be the end to the icon. Christianity is the revelation not only of the Word of God, but also of the image of God, in which his likeness is revealed. This God-like image is the distinctive feature of the New Testament. The ways of iconography are the same as the ways of theology. Both theology and iconography are faced with the challenge of expressing the Creator by means of the created world. Both theology and iconography must reach the limit of human possibilities, however insufficient.

11. The teaching concerning the purpose of Christian life continues to exist. The dogmatic teaching concerning the icon also continues to exist and live in the divine services of the Orthodox Church, thanks to which the right attitude towards the icon is preserved. It is very important for the Orthodox faithful never to reduce the icon to an object of aesthetic admiration or an object of study, because it is living grace — inspired art which feeds us. In our times as of old, the icon corresponds to a definite concrete reality and living experience, which is at all times alive in the Church.

12. "The Lord is known in the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is in the whole of man — in his soul, his mind and his body," Staretz Silouan (1866-1938) of Mount Athos said.³⁴ Thus, as the living experience of the deification of man continues to exist, so too lives the iconographic tradition, and with it its technique; since as long as this experience is alive, its expression, whether in word or image, cannot disappear. In other words, being the outer expression of the likeness of God in man, the icon cannot disappear just as the likeness of man to God cannot disappear.³⁵

13. I would like to conclude with the words of Saint Symeon the New Theologian, spoken in the eleventh century, which apply here as they apply to any period of the Church's history: "Those who say that now there are no men who could be . . . worthy of receiving the Holy Spirit . . . , of being regenerated through the grace of the Holy Spirit and becoming the sons of God with consciousness, practical experience and vision, overthrow the whole dispensation of the Incarnation

³⁴Archimandrite Sophrony, *Wisdom from Mount Athos: The Writings of Staretz Silouan 1866-1938* (Crestwood, 1975).

³⁵Ouspensky and Lossky, *Meaning*, p. 49.

of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ and clearly deny the renewal of God's image or human nature, corrupted and slain by sin."³⁶

14. The weeping icons throughout the world also testify that the decision of the holy fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council is correct. They show us "a miracle, a sign, a visit, a message from heaven," for a much greater scope — the spiritual regeneration of mankind. The weeping icons give us a sign through images, thus confirming and sanctifying sacred art, as it was known even to the ancients. The art that taught, guided, and inspired Christians since the foundation of the Church has been ignored and modified to such a degree that we can no longer tell the difference between that which is sacred and that which is secular. The true icon is a means of communication with God. The icon is a prayer, an expression of faith, and a guiding light; it is universal, it has been with the Church for nearly two thousand years and it does not have jurisdictional boundaries. Finally from a historical perspective, I think that perhaps the icon will show us the way when dialogues have failed. Perhaps the language of the sacred image will teach us the Lord's statutes; perhaps it will enable us to know ourselves better. Perhaps this is what the weeping icons are trying to tell us.³⁷

³⁶Symeon the New Theologian, *Discourse 64* (Moscow, 1892) p. 127 in Russian; Ouspensky and Lossky, *Meaning*, p. 49.

³⁷Alexander Jasiukowicz, "The Weeping Mother," *The Dawn*, 107 (1987) p. 8.

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The Kingdom of Caesar and the Reign of Christ

ALEXIS KNIAZEFF

I HAVE BEEN ASKED TO DEAL WITH THE THEME: "KINGDOM AND SOCIETY." I shall try to concentrate on one of its essential aspects: Christ and Caesar, Caesar and the Church of Christ.

Needless to say, at all times the Church has been confronted with Caesar, that is, with the state: in the first phase, persecution followed by an attempt for a "symphonia," and in modern times, either a state departmentalization, indifferent treatment from the state, or again, persecution. Moreover, in the period in which we live, the Church has lost all influence on society. Hence, our question: in what spirit will the Church face the twenty-first century? All will depend on the Church's awareness of her place, mission, and above all, of what she herself is.

One thing is certain, even if the Church's legal status has changed and her place in society is now far from being what it was in the beginning of the twentieth century: her mission is eternal. Hence, it always remains the same. The Church is still called upon to lead men, through history, toward the kingdom where God will be all in all (1 Cor 15.25-28). Her nature is the same: she is still the Body of Christ and the temple of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, the promises given to her remain the same (Mt 16.18). Thus, there actually exists the same help of Christ who received all power on earth as in heaven (Mt 28.18-20), and of the one and same Holy Spirit (Lk 24.49; Jn 15.26, 16.15, etc.). But to that main truth, other considerations are to be added.

Whatever the attempts are to present religion as a private affair (*Privatsache*) and to enact laws to that effect, religion, on its human side, is and remains a social fact. Therefore, even when persecuted, religion will always have its place in human society.

Let us not forget also that, notwithstanding political and social

changes, it is the human individual who is the fundamental entity in culture and, therefore, it is this individual (and not society) who is the active subject in culture. Some states have endeavored to impose an official culture, as have certain political parties. However, no positive result has been achieved. This imposition merely led to a further degradation of the human person because in the field of culture, creativity stems from individuals and is the very reality of the person. As Jeremiah demonstrated, it is the individual, the person, who is the religious entity. It is, therefore, within the human person that religion inspires and fruitfully incites any creativity. In addition, it is culture that offers its social ground to religion and religion that offers dynamism to culture.

If, therefore, the earthly church plays her role fully, which is to lead men and the world to Christ and through him towards the kingdom of the Father, while not losing sight of that aim due to considerations alien to her mission, she can still hope to do great things for culture and through it for Caesar himself and his kingdom. Indeed, one should not forget that Caesar has also been redeemed by Christ and, therefore, exorcised by the Holy Spirit and called upon to inherit salvation.

We must realize that the task the Church is called upon to perform in our present world will be long and arduous. Moreover, it will be entirely different from that which she was called upon to accomplish in the past. It is impossible to foresee even today the framework of that task and the stages of its development. Furthermore, we cannot know the ways of providence. Therefore, to set forth programs or make forecasts would be out of the question. The only thing we will do now is to suggest lines of action, or starting points, in order to regain what was lost, to reconquer it, and to gain new positions. What we shall try to do is to put forth a score of proposals. To simplify matters, we shall pose them in the form of questions and answers.

First proposal: What is to be the main emphasis of the efforts of the Church in the coming century?

We find the reply in Matthew 28.19, "Go, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them. . . ." This commandment is well understood in modern biblical translations. We are to make disciples and not baptize heathens! Indeed, to receive baptism is to accept Christ as Lord. To become a disciple implies, therefore, to agree to learn, understand, and follow the language of the Cross (1 Cor 1.18). To agree with that language means the acceptance of a personal as well as a social responsibility in all human activities, including those concerning the state. To understand and accept the language of the Cross means to accept the law of Christ and to place it above one's

own law, even if it should lead to sacrifice. The Church, therefore, must always live a life of witness in order to remind Caesar that, first, above his law, which is an earthly one, is the law of Christ, to whom all power is given, and that the day shall come when he, Caesar, will be judged by Christ, as will his subjects.

Second proposal: This proposal has to do with Caesar himself. What kind of a Caesar have we today?

He is no more a king by divine right, even where there is still a monarchy, nor is he an emperor anointed by God. Today's Caesar is a collective Caesar. He is comprised of the entire body of citizens, that is, of the entire people of a state. Such is the case in states where the people are called to vote and to express themselves, where public opinion influences state policy and public affairs. Even in places where the populace is reduced to silence, there is a latent public opinion which someday may write and speak for itself. The Church has to wish and act in the sense that the body of citizens become the people of God and that the people of God become a body of citizens.

Third Proposal: This proposal concerns the form of the State. What is its importance for the Church?

All that the Church may seek from the state is that it be respectful of law, justice, and the human person. Let us recall the words of Saint Paul (2 Thess 2.7): "the one that restrains the mystery of impiety at work" (*ὁ κατέχων* or *τὸ κατέχον*), has been understood as referring to the Roman Empire. If such is the genuine meaning of this expression, the Roman Empire must be interpreted as the symbol of a situation in the world where law, as well as the human person, is respected. Such a situation is certainly in accord with Christian values, as is the general notion of the law, for which Christians are called to struggle. Indeed, the Mosaic Law, as Paul has shown in Galatians 3.23-25, was a pedagogue for Christ. Men still need pedagogues to fully introduce them into the realm of grace. Such a role can be fulfilled by any real system protecting the human person and contributing to its ascent. That is to say, one has to look for justification from the Christian standpoint to the law and lawfulness in general.

Fourth proposal: What spirit should imbue the Church when acting to make a Christian the present collective Caesar?

The reply is to be found in the parable about those bidden to the great supper and replaced by the poor (14.15). The master said to his servant: "*ἀνάγκασον εἰσελθεῖν*." Augustine and others understood such as "impelle intrare," oblige or constrain to come in, by force, if need be. However, the actual meaning refers to the need to show them to come in, to make pressing invitations. Such should be the

way of the Church. Indeed, Christ looks not for slaves, but for friends (Jn 14.14-15). On the other hand, in our present world more than ever, the Church is lacking the constraining power of the state, therefore, bid, convince to enter—let *that* be your sole concern, and do not seek anything for yourself!

Fifth proposal: What should one do concerning religious pluralism and, in general, any pluralism which characterizes our modern world?

There is but one reply: to show tolerance. But, what kind of tolerance, the one deriving from indifference, from agnosticism? Such a tolerance leads to a contempt for the opinion of others. There is, however, a Christian tolerance. It means that one recognizes himself in the other, realizing that he is inspired by the same search for God and the absolute, that he, as I, desires and struggles to devote himself to a higher ideal, although our paths may be different at the present time. If the other does not declare himself and act as an enemy of God, my faith, and my church, I say that I understand his striving as mine, and that I respect it and love it because it already makes us brothers — perhaps not yet in Christ, but certainly in God. Such a tolerance belongs to Christian love. Therefore, there should be no obstacle to the possibility of an ecumenical dialogue in the political field and to a cooperation among believers in the service of the state, as is already the case in the fields of theology, biblical and scientific research, charity, and social action.

Sixth proposal: What are we to request, as Christians, from the collective Caesar?

Are we to request that he be imbued with a spirit of sacrifice and civic duty? This means advancing understanding and accepting the language of the Cross. Our request is that the state demonstrate the spirit of tolerance, as was defined, that there be within the state a firm conviction to applying the norms of the Gospel in private as well as in social and political life. When such a consensus genuinely exists, there is no need for a given state to include in its constitution that it is Christian, even if it considers itself to be such.

Seventh proposal: What kind of status would the Church wish for herself within the state?

It is enough for her to be in a state which respects basic human rights. The Church has to accept and obey the laws of public order. However, the Church cannot renounce rights given by God himself and which make her the Church of Christ. She must, therefore, be free to celebrate the sacraments, preach, and to teach.

Eighth proposal: What should the wish of the Church be with respect to the government or the state?

It should simply be that it be governed in a spirit of justice, for

the common good, and respecting the rights of freedom. The Church must hope that government rule for the good of all, without using means such as demagoguery, lies, untruth, and laxity, not only by virtue of higher values, but also out of respect for its citizens.

Ninth proposal: Should the Church have the right of control in state affairs?

The reply is "no." It is, however, in the essence of the Church teaching that she should exact for herself a right of intercession, as was the "petchalovanie" in old Russia, which gave to the Church the opportunity to speak and claim that the will of God be heard and heeded.

Tenth proposal: What can the Church bring to the state?

She is called upon to pray, to intercede for the State, and to come to its help in momentous events of national life or in times of crisis. Furthermore, she can give great help to the state in the field of education and culture. She must support the state in whatever it does for the good of the people as defined in accordance with the will of God.

Eleventh proposal: What must the Church require of herself?

There is only one answer to this question. The Church must do all she can to be worthy of her responsibilities: she must be credible. In this respect, even if the Church is called to support the case of a people or of a state, or if she is bound by history to the life of a nation, a people, or a state, she is not to be subservient to it. In order to be authoritative, any word spoken by the Church must have a universal scope and not be a mere sound in the cacophony of the moment's world politics. Let her at least clearly say in whose name she speaks, naming Christ and his Father, and not merely referring to "human rights" and other purely human principles and slogans. In any word and any act, the Church should be the universal Church, never forgetting her catholicity and, thus, her calling to objective and eternal truth.

Twelfth proposal: What is the real change in the situation of the Church on earth since she lost her privileges in the kingdom of Caesar?

The answer is this: she can count only on herself and on Christ. There was a time when Caesar helped the Church in her mission, when he even took her place in performing her great tasks, such as evangelizing nations. Nowadays, the Church alone is responsible for all her tasks, even for the one which Christ assigned to her vis-à-vis Caesar. Responsibilities have indeed been greatly displaced. In the past, as regards Christ's lordship in the world, the Caesar who wished

to be Christian took upon himself a large share of the responsibility together with the Church. Today, the responsibility rests entirely on the Church, on her hierarchy, as well as on the whole Christian people. The Church must become fully aware of this reality and ask for the help of the Lord.

The Church must ask for God's help for all things she is called upon to achieve in this world and in particular for all she has to do regarding Caesar. Indeed, it is one of the secrets of providence that many things here in the world still depend on Caesar, even when he does not act in favor of Christ's lordship and the promotion of his reign. In this field, Caesar can choose to leave all freedom to the Church. The Church is then in a position to do what she is to do, and the Christian people are then called upon to multiply, among the other gifts or talents that man has received from God, the one which is to govern, organize, and exert his earthly power for the sake of good. If the people of God answer the call and follow this way, they will enter into the joy of the Lord for having increased that talent on the Day of Judgment. If they bury that talent, they will be reprov'd as the slothful servant (Mt 25.14-30).

Caesar may, however, choose to persecute the Church. Were such the turn of events, it would be for the time of witnessing (*μαρτυρία*), as the expression was understood in the Church of the first centuries. It may finally be the revelation of the "man of lawlessness," (impiety, individual or collective), "let no man deceive you by any means: for that shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition." (2 Thes 2.3; Is 11.4). However, who knows the decrees of God? Or else, as in the past, Caesar will again convert to Christ, and then, perhaps, a new period of hope and achievement will be inaugurated for the Church, for Caesar himself, for human society, and for the entire world.

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The Kingdom of God and Society An Inquiry into the Meaning of the Seventh Ecumenical Council for Today

NIKOLAI A. ZABOLOTSKY

THINKING ABOUT HISTORY—OF GOD'S WORKS DONE AT TIMES AND places removed from our time and place—and trying by our interior mind to penetrate New Testament thinking as well as apostolic and patristic thinking, we, as contemporary theologians, and particularly, calling ourselves Orthodox (glorifying rightly means thinking and living rightly), all inclusive of all persons living today. And this is why Scripture with its unfathomably significant meaning and patristic writings inevitably is and has always been in history for us an impetus towards understanding the present in the light of the faith, in the sense of the Scripture, in the spirit of the Patristic writings. The chief thing is faith. The second is understanding the present from the perspective of history. The third is foreseeing the future in the hope of God's great mercy on us sinners.

And let God save us from the 'theological pride' that has been the root of all heresies and that even now deprives the world of the all-healing love of Christ.

Seventh Ecumenical Council: Was it Just a Council to Defend Icon Veneration?

Academic theology at the seminary level usually pays attention only to the main theme of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, the defense of icon veneration. The dogma of icon veneration is so prominent in the council's decisions that its light makes less visible other very important aspects of the conciliar transactions. However, icon veneration, no matter how predominant, was by no means the only issue, and it cannot be separated from what generally constituted the background of theological discussion throughout the conciliar period

of the first Christian millenium and what has remained and will have remained until the end of the ages chief and paramount.

That which is chief and paramount is faith in Christ, the Logos incarnate, who, in order to save the world, reunited in himself in the unity of his unique personality, the divine and human. That which is chief and paramount is that Christ, the head of the Church, has called on humankind to follow him in what is theandric, i.e., pertaining at the same time to both the worldly, earthly, everyday life, and also to the heavenly, spiritual life, so as to reach, in a creative synthesis of heterogenous elements, the perfection of the prospect which has been set out in the Apostle Paul's words, 'That God may be all in all' (1 Cor 15.28).

Conciliar Activity in the Context of the Council's Transactions, and in What Is Implied by the Slavonic Term Sobornost ('Catholicity')

During the work of the WCC Commission on Faith, Order and Witness, it was correctly noted that no church council and no Council transactions should be considered in isolation. In all such considerations, the consistency and the organic interrelation of the whole was noted—the link of the faith in spiritual activity. Meanwhile, the faith is always simple, the rule of the faith is always the same as it was in the minds and hearts of the Apostles and the Apostolic Fathers, those who initiated the conciliar activity of the Church. The faith is simple and is always more open, more profound, more fundamental than logical speculation or even dogma, for dogma is but explanation of the faith, and in it human reason is present; dogmas are sacred only inasmuch as they are imbued with divine inspiration according to our faith, that is, by the descending inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The rule of faith is love. The perspective of faith and love is hope. Faith, hope, and love provide consistency and organic interrelation of the whole in the conciliar activity and the Catholicity of the Church.

Of course, what has just been said is ideally true. But ideals are not always fully implemented in history. Hence Christendom is divided. But the meaning of theological striving now and in the future is in seeking to approach the ideal and thus to be obedient to Christ, who prayed to his Heavenly Father before undergoing the sufferings on the Cross for unity—or such an organic interrelation of the whole in faith, hope, and love that would ensure the ultimate purpose and meaning of existence, the salvation of the world.

Still there is continuity in the conciliar activity throughout the first millenium and there are pursued the elements of organic unity.

The acts of the Seventh Ecumenical Council are inseparable from those of the preceding councils, especially of the Fourth and Sixth

Councils.

The Christological Canons

However controversial the Iconoclast Council preceding the Seventh Ecumenical Council, its acts are interesting in the sense that they emphasize the Christological theme. The rejection of icon veneration is linked there with the Nestorian and the Monophysite heresies rejected earlier by the Church. But the same christological theme is sounded in the Acts of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, not so much in the rejection of the former heresies as in the reaffirmation of the Chalcedonian dogma.

The fathers of the Iconoclast Council, taking into consideration the circumstances of the time and facing a certain pressure from the Isaurian dynasty's policies, became embroiled in the previous dogmatic polemics and transferred them to the problem of icon veneration under consideration, as well as to the problem of ordering ecclesiastical society. The result was the rejection of icons and a negative attitude towards monasticism. The one and the other were partly justifiable if a polemic antimonophysite and antinestorian note was sounded and a natural resistance shown to the development of superstition, bigotry, and a growing stratification of the Christian world where asceticism, with its refusal of the world, tended to become destructive. Perhaps the arguments proffered by the Iconoclast council Fathers had their significance at the time and could be useful now in facing such new phenomena as the Neomonophysitism and the Neonestorianism of our time which were noted, for instance, by Father Georges Florovsky.

But most of the same bishops were participants in the Seventh Ecumenical Council as well. And it was not only the change of political trends but also the renewed emphasis placed on the reaffirmation of the Chalcedonian dogma that brought them back to Orthodoxy and produced the prospect of the rule of faith relating to life, and thus of the assertion of life in general, in the dogmatic definition they worked out.

The Chalcedonian dogma with all of its seemingly paradoxical character was that which reaffirmed icon veneration and which has been, is, and will be forever the reaffirmation of the Christian faith and an impetus for Christian activity, for in it there is the twofold unity of the divine and the human, an instance and the paragon of human existence in the material and the spiritual, the way of life and the meaning of existence.

However, when speaking about Chalcedon, one must keep in mind the dogmatic definition of the Sixth Ecumenical Council which

transfers christology from the realm of an abstract idea about a twofold unity of natures in Christ to the sphere of energies, the will, and action. It presents to the Christian world the paragon of unity of the divine and human, the spiritual and the material in action, or in other words, a paragon of *synergia*—co-operation with God. It is in such co-operation that monastic asceticism and in general any Christian asceticism becomes creative and life-asserting in the spirit of Paschal optimism, where 'Christ is Risen' is the proclamation of life and where *synergeia* means 'getting together with Christ and in Christ,' a true Catholicity (*sobornost*) for the sake of life eternal under the sign of the coming kingdom of eternity.

Old Heresies with a New Face

Is it correct to transfer into human life that which pertains to divine dogma? Such a transfer may seem to be too daring and arrogant. But is there a different way of understanding the meaning of divine dogma for human life?

In fact, such transfer of the sense and the meaning of dogma into history does indeed take place, and it is in relation to this or that interpretation of Church doctrine that the conscience and the practical life of individuals, different groups and greater human communities are built.

It seems the transfer of the sense and meaning of the dogmas of faith into our life is not only permissible—it is indispensable. Our Lord Jesus Christ himself, the primary dogma of the dogmas, has entered the life of the world, becoming in incarnation consubstantial to us in his humanity. He was not of the world, but he lived, worked miracles, suffered, died, and rose again in this earthly world, and this very world which had been his ever since its beginning, became even more his own in the Incarnation and Atonement.

It is because the dogmas of the faith are vital for everyday life that we are sure Christ has supremacy over the world and can say that he, Christ, is the Life of the world.

However, various interpretations of Church doctrine led to heterodoxy and hence to an erroneous direction of life and thus to sinfulness, and in the terms of the Fathers of the Ecumenical Councils, heresy.

Without going too deeply into what we mentioned earlier as Neomonophysitism and Neonestorianism, we would like to give our own assessment of these new faces assumed by the early heresies, and draw implications for the life of the modern world.

Monophysitism in contemporary life and practical actions has the form of either 'Theomonophysitism' or 'cosmomonophysitism.' The

first is faith in God only. The second, faith in the world only. Of course there is some overstatement and exaggeration in this. But the implications are clear. Theomonophysites are exclusively centered on faith in God, disparaging the significance of the world. Religious bigotry, a sort of fetishism, often takes the place of love and hope in their hearts. Faith is often transformed into a belief in rituals. The direct consequence is reluctance to serve the world where only sin and the kingdom of the prince of this world, the devil, are thought to be found. Cosmomonophysites believe only in this world, rejecting God. In this case, human pride, the seeking of power and glory, self-love, and disregard for moral values and the like could become highly developed, although this may not be said about each and every cosmomonophysite indiscriminately. There is still a faith, if only in science; there is still love, if only for nature and for close associates; there is still hope, if only for eternity and the viability of the Universe. A partial manifestation of Cosmomonophysitism is homocentrism, that is, recognizing only the value of one's own conscience, one's private life, or worshipping persons somewhat out of the ordinary (thus making man into god).

Neonestorianism is harder to define. It is broader than homocentrism, but is also based exclusively on recognizing the worth of the human person. If divinity is accepted, it is as an abstract entity far removed from the world. For the neonestorians, Christ is a personage of history, 'our Brother' only, a divinized man. For them, the value of religion is in morality. This kind of belief fosters vigor of mind and effort. In everyday life, Christian love may be either present or absent. Hope acquires the characteristic of earthly or cosmic prospects of achieving material, moral and spiritual perfection through the will and energy of man and human society in general. Scientific knowledge is more important for the neonestorians than are supernatural forces, although the latter are not denied, thus providing, as it were, moral stimulus for human activity.

Without going into more detail or resorting to any labels, especially since the characteristics given are all but clearcut when placed in reference to a particular individual or social group, it is still necessary to take notice of the psychological trends issuing from this or that 'belief,' and of the fact that these trends do form currents in religion and science, ideologies and policies.

Orthodox Faith

The Orthodox faith, as set forth by the Fourth Ecumenical Council at Chalcedon and followed by the Sixth and Seventh Ecumenical Councils, is a christological faith in its theology and dogmatic definitions.

"In following the Holy Fathers, we believe in the One Person of

the Lord Jesus Christ perceived in one hypostasis and in two natures, the divine and human, unconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably." This is the abridged formula of the Chacedonian definition. It is "unconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably" true that these two natures are united in the one Person, the one hypostasis of God the Word, one of the Holy Trinity, the Logos being out of time and space, Consubstantial to the Father and the Holy Spirit in divinity, and consubstantial to us, and through us to his immortal and eternal humanity. Great is this mystery. And it could be expressed only in the paradoxical and dialectical language used by the Fathers of the council that retains permanent importance for the life of the world. The twentieth and the twenty-first centuries of human history, just like the preceeding centuries, are but landmarks of the salutary design of the Most High who was given to the world in the words of the divinely enlightened Fathers this paradoxically dialectical formula that is projected onto the life of the created world and of humanity. The image and likeness of Christ, the triune God incarnate, has again reaffirmed the biblical statement that man was created in the image and likeness of God, thus calling for a dual unity of faith and action.

And this dual unity is dialectically paradoxical indeed. Death and immortality, life in God and in the world, faith and cognition, matter and spirit—all is encompassed in the human conscience and the human soul. This dual unity is interpreted, justified, and implemented in reality in a way similar to that given in the God-man, the chief of the faith, the Lord and Savior of the world, Christ himself.

Is not the Roman Catholic theologian, philosopher, and anthropologist Father Teilhard de Chardin right to affirm that the dual unity of faith in God and faith in the world is something that should lead to an unprecedented surge of progress, thus bringing about Christogenesis and attaining the point Omega, when "God (will be) all in all"? Is not the Russian author F. M. Dostoyevsky right in affirming, in the words of one of his literary heroes, that "Beauty will save the world"? Is not the priest and scholar Father Pavel Florenski right in his affirmation of the indissoluble link between faith and knowledge? And was not the World Conference on Faith, Science, and the Future, held in Boston, supportive of this same understanding?

Dual unity is the faith and the way of Chalcedon, Constantinople, and Nicaea. It is the faith and life of Orthodoxy.

It was this Christological theme that constituted the backdrop to the discussions on icon veneration at the Seventh Ecumenical Council. At the same time, there were other issues there elaborated, again relevant for today.

LEGACY OF THE SEVENTH ECUMENICAL COUNCIL

Tradition is essential in Orthodoxy as a doctrinal factor. This is why the Acts of the Seventh Ecumenical Council are not just history; they are precepts for the coming Christian generations to uphold the values attained by wise conciliar thinking. In this thinking, synergy of the human, pertaining to the council Fathers, and of the divine, pertaining to the Holy Spirit, is manifested and is interpreted in such a way that the faith remains constant and adequate to the faithful conscience at every time and in every place.

True Reverence for Icons: a Reaffirmation of the Christological Faith of Chalcedon and Constantinople (Fourth to Sixth Ecumenical Councils)

The Acts of the Seventh Ecumenical Council posed the question of the correlation between material and spiritual values in liturgy. It is clearly stated in the Council definition that true adoration is due only to God. That means worshiping God glorified in the Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. But worshiping one of the Holy Trinity, the Son, means worshiping Christ, who has reunited in one hypostasis divinity and humanity, that is, the heavenly and earthly, the spiritual and material. Thus, true adoration rendered to God in his superbly spiritual image is to a certain degree extended also to the material that in some way or other is united to the spiritual or is imbued by it. The unconfused, unchangeable, indivisible, and inseparable union of the divine and human natures in Christ requires worshiping this unity in which the body and blood of Christ are not only divinized, but divine. An Orthodox Christian partakes of the Eucharist of the true body and true blood of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ in the manner in which we partake of material things, and in it is contained his unemcompassable divinity. In the Eucharist is the true worship of God in Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Material in this or that way united to the spiritual after the image of the Cross and the Gospel—united not the way it is in the Eucharist, but according to the grace of holy interpenetration (including the holy icons), is no object of worship which pertains to God only. To it holy veneration is rendered. A fine distinction exists admitting of no “idolatry,” or of a monophysite deification of the object as such, and at the same time permitting no Nestorian separation under which the object remains what it is, and its spirituality and quality of being grace-endowed stay as something separate, only indirectly related to the object.

The Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, besides distinguishing between the terms “worship” and “veneration,” also

noted the difference between the "type" (icon) and the "prototype." The Cross, the gospel, holy icons, and relics, other objects and substances, such as consecrated oil and holy water—all of these are the material 'types,' the things a Christian in fact encounters in liturgy and which remind, educate, move, yet, even if treated with utmost reverence or veneration, they should, in the terms of the dogma of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, just refer him towards the 'prototypes,' that is, either to Christ crucified for the salvation of humankind, or to the divine Word of revelation in the holy Scripture of the Old and New Testaments, chiefly in the Gospels, or to the Holy Spirit who bestows grace upon holy Chrism, consecrated oil, holy water, or to the saints glorified by God, with the blessed Virgin Mary at their head. Thus in liturgy, venerated by the faithful, the material things are the means of ascending to the realm of the spirit, the heavenly world of Christ, the Mother of God, the saints, the sphere where the Holy Spirit is active. Thus, the veneration of the images becomes adoration of God through the ascent to the prototypes. In the reality of Orthodox religious life the distinctions mentioned above are noticeable; in them and through them the Chalcedonian motif of "unconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably" is constantly vibrant.

A Life-giving Faith

In what way does the icon, "image," become a sacred symbol of ascent from the earthly to the heavenly? When does it become the *locus* where the material and the spiritual unite?

It is not a question of who painted the icon, or how, or in what style, or to which epoch it belongs, or who consecrated it in church. It is a question of the holiness of the icon as such. Moreover, it is a question of holiness preserved in the Church and of religion in general, which, according to the original meaning of the word itself, links the heavenly and the earthly. In the earthly aspect, it is a question of the believer, the community of faithful, and the Church. And thinking of the heavenly, we should silently bow in reverence to the grace sent to us from above which becomes manifest in the miraculous things worked through the icons, relics, and other holy objects venerated by Christians.

The icon is a material object in which wood, woven fabric, oil, colors, and similar things are used, all of them fairly ordinary and earthly. However, the mind, the heart, the laboring hands of the icon painter work at them. That which is material is reunited with the spiritual-pneumatic at the human level. It would have been too little but for that which is pictured in the icon, whether in symbols or faces,

which is the spiritual referring to the "prototype." And again it would have been too little but for consecration through the prayer and blessing of the Church. And even this would have been too little but for the prayers of the faithful in front of it. It is in this way that the icon becomes holy, miracle-working, myron-exuding, or tear-shedding, that is, something alive and almost animate in the eyes of the faithful. Miracles worked through the icons, relics, and other objects of religious veneration undoubtedly signify their inspiration from above. However, no tangible holiness of an icon is possible without the faith and the prayers of the believers.

The Orthodox Churches themselves are icons in the sense that they are pure in their lines, beauty, and their sublime nature, in the fact that they are crowned by the holy Cross. In the festal ringing of their bells and in their interior concentration on prayer, they signify the great mystery and the miracle of the union of the earthly and the heavenly. It is no accident that an Orthodox Christian always makes the sign of the cross when passing by a church of God. Just as there are miracle-working icons, Orthodox churches have also been called "prayer-imbued." The faith and prayer of the believers, answered by a descent of divine grace, give life to the churches just as faith, prayer, and grace render life to the holy icons. It is no accident that beauty is mentioned. A creator of Orthodox shrines, whether an icon painter, a sculptor, or an architect, fashions his pieces thinking of beauty, and the very beauty of the churches, icons, and holy objects becomes an image, an icon, that exalts the heart towards the superior beauty of the Divine.

Orthodox liturgy itself is an image, an icon. Therefore it would be infringing upon the decisions of the Seventh Ecumenical Council to oversimplify church design, water down icon painting, and clear the churches of allegedly superfluous icons, thereby banishing magnificence and splendor from liturgy.

In the eyes of the simple faithful the clergy, that is the bishops, priests and deacons are also images—icons. In fact, they intercede at the church altar which in the Eucharist becomes the heavenly throne for the faithful people gathered in the church. Through them, prayer is visibly offered, and it is with their hands that grace is administered to the faithful. The priests, who have received in ordination the special grace of the Holy Spirit, are called to manifest in all of their life the mysterious and at the same time tangible union of the human and Divine, the material and spiritual. And as we apply to clergy the dogma of the Seventh Ecumenical Council on icon veneration, their role as sacred ministers in the life of the Church is especially emphasized. They are not only the witnesses and proclaimers of the life-giving

faith — they are themselves “intermediary images,” as if living icons, with their life and conduct referring to the sublime, spiritual, heavenly. Thus how great must be the responsibility of the clergy today!

However, any Christian and any Christian family can and must have an iconographic significance.

Everything that has been said to this point is intended to emphasize once more the interrelation between the Chalcedonian and the Second Nicaean Ecumenical Councils.

Concluding Remarks

(a) True icon veneration is a reaffirmation of the Christological faith of Chalcedon.

(b) True adoration and worship may only be rendered to the Holy Trinity, that is to the one God who in the hypostasis of the Word has accepted in the Lord Jesus Christ full and sinless human nature in an “unconfused, unchangeable, indivisible, inseparable” way with the hypostatic divine nature.

(c) Veneration of the Holy Cross, the Gospel, icons, or sculptured images of the Triune God, the Lord and Savior, the most-holy Mother of God, the saints, as well as of relics and other holy objects (such as the girdle of the Theotokos) is a pious rite with the purpose of reminding, educating, cultivating, and elevating the faithful soul from the image towards the “prototype.” And there must be no place in such veneration for the neomonophysism or the neonestorianism described above.

(d) However, there is deep sense in this veneration. There is not only a pious reminder or recollection, but also a prayerful means of attracting the spiritual through the so-called “material.” In other words, icons, relics of the saints, and other holy objects are intermediary values which on the one hand relate the praying souls to the “prototypes,” and on the other, transmit grace and mercy from above. They are holy in a twofold way: through the prayers of those worshipping in front of them and by the grace which they mediate from the “prototypes” through their intercession before God and the direct action by the Holy Spirit who is “everywhere present and fills all things.” In this, there is the mysticism of Orthodoxy.

(e) However, mysticism should in no way distract from practical action.

(f) Therefore grace-giving energy propagated by the objects of holy veneration, particularly of divine sacraments, of which the premiere is the Eucharist, calls for and actually inspires in the Christian people and in every individual Christian the energy for doing good in love and hope. In this respect the example of the theandric

will in Christ, defined by the dogma of the Sixth Ecumenical Council, is very important for giving support and direction to the faithful's energy and will. It is on this theandric will that the synergic level of Christian activity is based. Thus a human liturgy takes place alongside and following the Divine Liturgy. So divine grace penetrates the world and moves it toward salvation. It is through the works of Christian beneficence that the world approaches God.

(g) The dogma of the Seventh Ecumenical Council in its wider interpretation helps to suggest solutions to the problems of faith and life in a synthesis. It is synthesis as a method that is needed now in the twentieth century in order to overcome the extremes of an analytical approach to objects and phenomena characteristic of the past and that has led to unfavorable developments for human history in general and the Christian in particular.

An Ecumenical Example

While paying homage to the heroic efforts of those who struggled for the cause of icon veneration, for instance, Saint John of Damascus (whose writings, incidentally, set a very good example even for the theologians of our time in that they show him to be a systematizer of dogmatics, poet, hymnographer, ascetic, and saint glorified by the Church, who also supported and strengthened the institution of monasticism), the Seventh Ecumenical Council was a council of benevolent *economy* for those who had strayed into the iconoclastic fallacy. There were no anathemas against the iconoclasts, and they were not required to be received into Orthodoxy as were those involved in heresy. The Church, a healthy organism, was called upon by the council to heal the sick members by merciful treatment, without cutting them off. Is it not a good example for today?

While the Iconoclast council was a subservient tool of the state policy of the time, the Seventh Ecumenical Council in its encounter with the state and its politics manifested a catholic independence. And it is for this reason of subservience, besides the dogmatic reasons, that the Iconoclast council was rejected by the Church; but the Second Nicaean Council has been received and confirmed by it as a truly ecumenical council. Churches in their historic existence, as social institutions, are in this or that way tied to their peoples and states. There might be synergy in the tie if the latter are directed towards good and do not contradict Christian principles. However, the intrinsic catholic value of the Church should not be forgotten, especially that of the Universal Church. This intrinsic catholic value does not in principle coincide with statehood. Keeping and constantly renewing catholicity is the duty and the purpose of the Church, the duty

and the purpose of its hierarchy and theologians, the duty and the purpose of every member of Christ's Church.

Conclusion

The synthesis of Orthodox thinking and action in the ecumenical movement is a tireless search for a community and a consensus for the gathering of good fruit with Christ and in Christ, and for creating the kingdom of God in people's souls. Spiritual treasure may be gathered from this world as well, according to the Russian ascetic Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk. Let the example of the transactions of the ecumenical councils, including the Seventh, or the Second Nicaean, be an incentive for such a harvest.

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The Limits of the Church

VLASSIOS PHIDAS

THE THEOLOGICAL DISCUSSIONS WITHIN THE ECUMENICAL movement demonstrate that the mutual recognition of the validity of certain sacraments (Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry) is the basis for the view that different Christian traditions simply represent various formulations of the same apostolic faith, and that those outside the Orthodox Church hold the same essential faith despite its diverse expressions in different cultures, languages and religious contexts. Thus, ecumenical dialogue puts forth as its goal a mere theological agreement or compromise only in those areas, where division is clearly expressed in the life of the Church. The Vancouver Assembly proposed, for example, the reception of BEM as an expression of a common understanding of the apostolic faith: "For what the Churches are asked to receive in this text is not simply a document, but in this document the apostolic faith from which it comes and to which it bears witness." This vision of unity is based on the following requirements:

- a. the full recognition of Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry (BEM),
- b. a common understanding and expression of the apostolic faith, and
- c. common ways of decision-making and teaching the faith authorities.

In any event, it is clear that the cause of unity is poorly served through these ecumenical discussions because there is no agreement on how many theological issues there are on which a consensus should be reached before genuine unity is realized. Some churches propose that just a basic agreement on certain sacraments (Baptism, Eucharist, Ministry) could be considered as sufficient theological foundation for restoring communion; others regard every theological document as simply a first step towards deeper theological consensus. In reality, there is no clear vision of the goal which should guide theologians and church leaders, because, by putting various theological traditions into a common document, numerous fundamental theological questions are left unanswered. If ecumenical dialogue is really "a spiritual battle for truth," then it can be better served through the spirit of the holy tradition of the ancient and "undivided" Church which offers the key to distinguishing between the essential and secondary elements of the apostolic faith and reconciling existing diversities by recovering the integrity of the true faith.

Real unity cannot be based on an easy compromise, or on a mere accommodation to pluralism, because unity cannot be regarded as a goal to be reached regardless of the principles involved. That is why the purpose of this paper is neither to offer an apology for our Orthodox tradition, nor to cover up the real ecclesiological difficulties in contemporary ecumenical dialogue: it represents an effort to describe more clearly and to point out more fully the deep rooted theological causes of the historical divisions. In what follows we shall try to show the main ecclesiological problem and its great importance for the theological dialogue within the ecumenical movement.

I shall try to use in this brief paper only the canonical language which is proper to the Orthodox tradition, and to avoid using the kind of language which is more familiar to modern ecumenical circles. This is because I have become fully aware that language is in itself part of the ecclesiological problem which exists within the ecumenical movement. The usual theological obscurities or ambiguities of ecumenical terminology, especially with respect to ecclesiological questions, are intended to facilitate a growing convergence or agreement of different theological frames and to express with the same terms different realities. It is impossible, however, to do this with the established canonical terminology, which expresses a specific ecclesiological background and clearly one and the same ecclesial reality.

The canonical meaning of the "boundaries" or "limits" of the Church is indissolubly connected with the teaching concerning the Church's nature, essence, and mission, since the latter describe the inner unity of the ecclesial body. What is usually meant by the term

“boundaries of the Church” on the one hand, is derived from the ecclesiological peculiarities of each Church or confession, while on the other, it effects the content of their soteriological teachings.

The fact that a variety of ecclesiologies exists (e.g., Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Protestant, etc.) means that there also exists a corresponding differentiation as to the understanding of the boundaries of the Church, while the relationship between the boundaries of the Church and the range of the action of divine grace determines the soteriological dimension of the meaning of these boundaries.

It is true that the variety of ecclesiologies derives from the difference in the understanding of the Church’s nature, essence and mission, as it is also true that the ecclesiological teaching of the ancient and “undivided” Church was, in spite of certain divergencies in church practice, common to all local churches. The nucleus of this traditional ecclesiology was the common understanding of the Church’s christocentric ontology, i.e., the teaching concerning the Church as the historical body of Christ (*corpus Christi*), which is extended and realized in the history of salvation.

This common apostolic tradition was expressed in the teaching of the great Fathers and was lived and experienced continuously as the common faith of the Church both in the East and in the West during the period preceeding the great schism. On this common basis, related church practice was developed and corresponding decisions were taken by local and ecumenical councils. It is quite clear that this ecclesiology of the body of Christ, describing the Church’s christocentric ontology, reveals also the respective ecclesial conscience concerning the boundaries of the Church. After the great schism (1054), however, christological differentiations came about which shaped new presuppositions for approaching the delicate ecclesiological question concerning the Church’s boundaries.

Thus, a positive or negative evaluation of any ecclesiological development is possible on the basis of the authentic relationship of ecclesiology to christology, as this was expressed in the entire patristic tradition and in the ecclesiastical praxis of the undivided church. Theologically, it is self evident that any differentiation whatsoever in the patristic understanding of the relationship between ecclesiology and christology leads to a different understanding of the mystery of the Church itself and, consequently, to either a gradual or immediate ecclesiological differentiation. Every ecclesiological differentiation also affects either qualitatively (Roman Catholic) or quantitatively (Protestant) the corresponding teaching concerning the limits of the Church. This arises from the fact that every ecclesiology predetermines the identity of its own ecclesiastical body and that of

the ecclesiastical bodies outside itself; at the same time it also determines the acceptable framework within which the related church practice is to function.

In this spirit, it is possible to interpret the established differences among the churches participating in the ecumenical movement with reference to the ecclesiological presuppositions of their practice of, let us say, mutually accepting the validity of one another's baptism, or their practice of intercommunion, or even their acceptance of a unilateral practice of eucharistic hospitality, etc. It is indeed quite characteristic that the above-mentioned practices refer to the restoration of sacramental communion, the absence of which maintains the rift in the unity of the Church. This inner relationship between ecclesiology and sacraments is an indissoluble one, because, according to the patristic tradition, the sacraments manifest and indicate the whole ecclesial body. Hence, any differentiation whatsoever in ecclesiology is fully expressed in the specific sacramental praxis of the Church, which, in its turn, expresses the corresponding awareness of the Church's limits. Here, we can only present in a schematic way the main ecclesiological differentiations, which occurred after the great schism:

a) The progressive alienation of Western scholastic theology from the ecclesiological criteria of the common patristic tradition reduced in a progressive way the importance of the *Church's christocentric ontology* and led to a "*hierocratic*" understanding of the *constitutional basis* of the ecclesiastical body (the papacy and the hierarchy). The theoretical searching of scholastic theologians shaped even the conscience of the Roman Catholic Church, which came more and more to be expressed in the Church's respective praxis. Of course the Roman Catholic Church did not sever herself from the common patristic tradition and certainly did not reject the christocentric basis of patristic ecclesiology. At the same time, however, along with weakening the patristic ecclesiology of the body of Christ it advanced the ecclesiology of the "people of God," in order to facilitate this "hierocratic" interpretation.

The Protestant reformers challenged the entire ecclesiological structure of scholastic theology and set up against it a new teaching concerning the Church; this Protestant teaching provoked Roman Catholic polemic theology to intensify more and more its "hierocratic" tendencies. It is quite clear that anti-reformationist theology has deeply influenced all Roman Catholic theology equally until recent times. Thus, even in the official theological literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries one can see that the patristic doctrine of the christocentric ontology of the Church has been almost completely forgotten.

In fact, Christ's name is rarely mentioned even in the university manuals, which deal specifically with the systematic theology of the Church. Despite all this, however, the christocentric ontology of the Church, at least according to the scholastic "hierocratic" interpretation, was preserved in a latent form within the structures and conscience of the Roman Catholic Church, as clearly expressed in recent Roman Catholic theology.

b) Protestant theology, by rejecting the entire ecclesiological structure of scholastic theology, simultaneously rejected every concept of the Church's christocentric ontology, and stressed, in opposition to Roman Catholic theology, the absolute authority of the Word of God, the individual character of the experience of faith, the eschatological perspectives of the saving act of God, etc.

In this way, the rejection of the Church's christocentric ontology made the notion of the boundaries of the Church imperceptible and even a matter of indifference. Hence, in Protestant ecclesiological teaching the specific historical boundaries of the "visible" Church are relativized and in no way do they coincide with those of the "invisible" Church. This is because those who constitute the invisible Church, on the one hand, are known only to God, while, on the other hand, they could very well be members of "visible" churches, even different ones, as for example the Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox Church, etc. It is quite clear that such a distinction between the "visible" and the "invisible" churches completely relativizes the entire ecclesiology of the patristic tradition of the undivided church; it rejects the manifestation of the Church in and through the holy sacraments and is undecided as to the relationship between divine grace and the sacraments of the Church.

The differentiation of Protestant ecclesiology vis-à-vis that of Roman Catholicism can be more clearly understood through the following diagram:

a. According to Roman Catholic (and Orthodox) ecclesiology, the Church preexists and precedes the believers; thus, we have the following pattern: Christ—Church—believers.

b. According to Protestant ecclesiological teaching, believers preexist and precede the Church, which they also constitute; thus, we have the following pattern: Christ—believers—Church. It is evident that in the Protestant schema there is no place for the patristic christocentric ontology of the Church.

Orthodox theology, despite some partial and periodic influences from either Roman Catholic or Protestant theology, has remained faithful to patristic tradition and has fought to preserve the authentic ecclesial experience. According to Orthodox ecclesiology, the

Church is the *one and only body of Christ* in the history of salvation. This one body of Christ, which is the Church, is realized in history *as one and not many ecclesial bodies*: it is manifested in the holy sacraments of the Church, since the Church is "marked" (σημειοῦται) in the sacraments. Orthodox ecclesiology excludes the manifestation of the one body of Christ in other ecclesiastical bodies outside it, *since the body of Christ is only one and not many*. These strict ecclesiological presuppositions predetermine the content and define the specific character of Orthodox ecclesiology.

On the basis of the above ecclesiological presuppositions, we could schematically relate to one another certain conclusions concerning the understanding of the Church's limits by the above mentioned ecclesiastical bodies:

a. The *Orthodox Church*, preserving the criteria of an *exclusive ecclesiology*, strictly marks out the *canonical limits of her ecclesial body* and, thus, applies ecclesiological presuppositions in ecclesiastical praxis, both within its own body and in its relations with those ecclesiastical bodies outside it.

b. The *Roman Catholic Church*, though identifying the canonical limits of the Church with its ecclesiastical body, has developed a *flexible* attitude about canonical limits of the Church, employing it in its relations with the ecclesiastical bodies outside it; hence, *her ecclesiology should not be described as exclusive*. This is in line with its teaching on divine grace, as we shall see later.

c. *Protestant ecclesiology could be described as an open ecclesiology without canonical limits*. This loose ecclesiology is in turn expressed in Protestant theology and life.

Thus, the issues mentioned in the beginning of this paper concerning the contemporary ecumenical dialogue, i.e., mutual recognition of baptism, intercommunion, eucharistic hospitality, etc., are approached with good reason by theologians of the various churches in a variety of ways, depending upon the various ecclesiological presuppositions of their respective Churches. In this case, the whole question of the *validity of the sacraments* performed outside the Orthodox Church is a broader theological issue and is deeply connected not only with the inner relationship between the sacraments and the Church, but also with the indissoluble unity between the paschal mystery and the mystery of Pentecost.

5. The ecclesiological differentiation, which we have pointed out above, springs precisely from the different interpretations of the relationship of the *paschal mystery to that of pentecost, especially with regard to the variety of ways in which the saving grace of God is related, through these various interpretations, to these mysteries*.

Thus, during the period prior to the great schism (1054), the common patristic tradition, which is preserved by the Orthodox Church, teaches that Christ, through his overall redeeming work, is the Source (πηγή) of divine grace and that the Holy Spirit is the bestower (χορηγός) and operator (τὸ ἐνεργεῖν) of divine grace in the faithful.

Scholastic theology, which relied on Saint Augustine's doctrine as its starting point, developed a different view concerning the relationship between the paschal and pentecostal mysteries. It put forth Christ *both* as source (πηγή) and bestower (χορηγός) of divine grace, while ascribing to the Holy Spirit the *mere role* of the Operator (τὸ ἐνεργεῖν) of the divine grace-already granted in the faithful, thereby emphasizing all the more the strong *christomonistic* tendencies which already existed in western theology.

The *ecclesiological consequences* of such a theological differentiation were, according to our opinion, decisive for the historical process which led to the divergence between the churches of the east and west, as well as to the two divergent tendencies within western Christianity (Roman Catholicism and Protestantism).

Indeed, if Jesus Christ through his overall redeeming work is not only the Source, but also the Bestower of divine grace, then, it stands to reason that, because of the *universality* of the work of Christ, divine grace, which springs from his saving work, is *automatically granted to all*, irrespective of their relationship to the Church, within which this bestowed divine grace is exclusively active through the Holy Spirit.

If, however, this divine grace is granted to all, because of the *universality* of Christ's redeeming work, then, it stands to reason that it is bestowed also in those believers outside the Roman Catholic Church even if such persons belong to a heresy or schism. Thus, the sacraments performed outside the Church are not only *real ὑποστατά*), but also *valid* (ἔγκυρα), because they lack only the *efficacy* of divine grace which is bestowed through the Holy Spirit for the edification of the faithful, and which is operative only within the Roman Catholic Church.

Nevertheless, such an understanding of the redeeming work of Christ is *more or less static* and exhausted within the redemptive work of Christ, accomplished *once and for all* (ἐφά ἅπαξ); it reduces the *christocentric ontology* of the Church as the historical body of Christ, which is extended, realized and active in the history of salvation. If the Church is, in the words of Saint Augustine, Christ himself extended through the ages (*Christus prolongatus*), then the *Church cannot be distinguished from Christ* as regards the bestowing of divine grace, since *no separation between Christ and the Church is possible*.

If, however, divine grace is granted by the Church, in which the historical body of Christ is realized, then how is it possible for divine grace to be bestowed by Christ outside his body, which is the Church?

The Orthodox Church, accepting Jesus Christ as the Source and the Holy Spirit as the Bestower and Operator of divine grace only within the community of the faithful, in no way denies the universality of Christ's redeeming work. It simply holds that this divine grace is perpetuated in the historical body of Christ, i.e., the Church, and is granted to the faithful by the Holy Spirit, which also effects divine grace in the Church for the continuous realization of the body of Christ in time and space. This christocentric ontology of the Church rules out the dilemma which western theology faces, viz., Christ or Church, for Christ becomes flesh in the Church through the Holy Spirit.

The ecclesiological consequences of such a theological tradition are also decisive for the question of the canonical boundaries of the Church, because on the basis of this christocentric ecclesiology the Church's limits are exhausted only within the Orthodox ecclesial body. It is only within this ecclesial body that the Holy Spirit bestows and effects divine grace, which flows from Christ's redemptive work.

Through such a teaching concerning the Church's nature, essence and mission in the world, one finds oneself face to face with the well known soteriological-ecclesiological principle of "extra Ecclesia nulla salus," which strictly determines the canonical limits of the Church. Thus, the Orthodox Church, while accepting the canonical possibility—according to each individual case—for recognizing the existence (ὑποστατόν) of sacraments performed outside herself, rejects or questions the validity (χῦρος) of the same and certainly rejects their efficacy (ἐνέργεια). It is already well known that in its ecclesial praxis, the Orthodox Church moves, according to the specific circumstances, between canonical "acribeia" and "ecclesiastical economy," recognizing by "economy" even the validity (χῦρος) of those sacraments performed outside her body by other ecclesial bodies. Yet, such a practice of economy does not overturn canonical "acribeia" which also remains in force and expresses the exclusive character of Orthodox ecclesiology.

This observation is very important, because it reveals that the canonical recognition (ἀναγνώρισις) of the validity of sacraments performed outside the Orthodox Church:

- a. is by "economy."
- b. covers only specific cases in certain given instances, and
- c. refers only to the validity of the sacraments of those who join the Orthodox Church, not of the ecclesial body to which those who join the Orthodox Church belong.

There is, of course, a variety of opinions or reservations concerning this question. No one, however, could propose or support the view that the mutual recognition of the validity of sacraments among the Churches is an ecclesiastical act consistent with Orthodox ecclesiology or an act which is not rejected by Orthodox canonical tradition.

In conclusion, we can say that Orthodox ecclesiology, being "exclusive" places special emphasis on the inner unity of the paschal and pentecostal mysteries. Roman Catholic ecclesiology, not being "exclusive," places special emphasis on the paschal mystery of Christ. Protestant ecclesiology, being very loose, places special emphasis on the pentecostal mystery.

It is quite clear that these different ecclesiological positions arise from different understandings concerning the bestower of divine grace and, more generally, concerning the work of the Holy Spirit within the Church. In this light, we can also say that the definition of a given Church's canonical limits varies, in accordance with the peculiarity of this church's ecclesiology, as well as by the peculiarity of its interpretation of the inner relationship between the paschal and pentecostal mysteries.

This variety also indicates the related ecclesiological difficulties concerning mutual recognition of the validity of sacraments:

a. The Protestant churches have no ecclesiological problem for proposing or supporting any kind of mutual recognition of the validity of sacraments performed outside their respective ecclesial bodies.

b. The Roman Catholic Church, even though it identifies the canonical limits of the Church with her own ecclesial body, is able to proceed to a kind of mutual recognition of the validity of sacraments without abrogating her fundamental ecclesiological principles.

c. The Orthodox Church cannot proceed to any kind of mutual recognition of the validity of sacraments without further development of her fundamental ecclesiological teaching on the canonical boundaries of the Church, because according to her ecclesiology those outside her ecclesial body belong either to schism or heresy.

It is quite clear that in the ecumenical dialogue the absolute ease of Protestant theologians, the relative ease of Roman Catholics and the limited ease of the Orthodox arise from their respective ecclesiological presuppositions and are not the result of their personal preferences. Thus, the mutual recognition of the validity of certain sacraments, which for a Protestant or Roman Catholic theologian could be considered as an ecclesologically consistent position, is for an Orthodox an act of inconsistency when assessed by Orthodox ecclesiological principles.

These ecclesiological principles of the Orthodox Church strictly manifest the organic unity of the Orthodox ecclesiastical body and differentiate all those who do not belong to her body as schismatics or heretics. The relationship of schismatics or heretics to the body of the Orthodox Church is strictly defined by canonical and patristic tradition; thus, there can be no deviation from this tradition without serious damage to her internal unity. To the body of the Church belong "the faithful throughout the οἰκουμένη, those who are such, those who become such and those who enter into such a condition. . . ."¹ They do not become "many bodies but one body" because "there is no other body" than "the one which is nourished."² The unity of the body is actualized by the Holy Spirit only in the one body of the Church, because "to be or not to be the body is to be united or not to be united" with the body.³

Certainly, however, Orthodox canonical tradition and praxis appraise and classify those outside the Orthodox Church into various categories analogous to their distance from the Church or deviation from the true faith. This classification concerns those beyond the boundaries of the Orthodox Church and is expressed by the differentiation in ecclesiastical praxis for their entry into her bosom. If, for example, the Orthodox Church stands for a particular circle which determines the boundaries of the Church, those found outside these boundaries are said to belong to external circles, in which some form of ecclesiality analogous to their distance from the boundaries of the Church exists.

This type of ecclesiality is not easily determined, because Orthodox tradition, accepting the Holy Spirit as the bestower of divine grace which flows from the work of Christ does not recognize the "existence" of this grace outside the canonical boundaries of the Orthodox Church. The Holy Spirit dispenses divine grace only within the body of the Church. On the contrary, the Roman Catholic Church, accepting Jesus Christ as the bestower of divine grace, can more readily define the ecclesiality of those ecclesial bodies existing outside her boundaries. Indeed, she did so through the decree "Unitatis Redintegratio" formulated by the Second Vatican Council, even though the above mentioned model regarding the circles of ecclesiality pertaining to those Christian outside her body, applies also to herself.

The reassessment of the Orthodox patristic tradition concern-

¹ Saint John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Ephesians*, 10.1.

² Saint John Chrysostom, *Homilies*, on 1 *Corinthians*, 24.2.

³ *Ibid.* 30.2.

ing the work of the Holy Spirit in relation to the boundaries of the Orthodox Church could offer *canonical support for the more flexible interpretation of the canonical tradition* regarding the precise content of the notion of the boundaries of the Church. In this connection, it would be useful to employ as a criterion the 66th Canon (Greek version, 69th) of the Synod of Carthage, which accepts as possible the restoration of "*communion*" with those having different views, for the *benefit of the Church*, and for a *more effective repentance* (*μετάνοια*) and *salvation* of those existing outside her boundaries and those who do not find themselves in full agreement with her faith:

Then when all things had been considered and treated of which seem to conduce to the advantage of the Church, the Spirit of God suggesting and admonishing us, we determined to act leniently and pacifically with the before mentioned men, although they were cut off from the unity of the Lord's body by an unruly dissent, so that (as much as in us lies) to all those who have been caught in the net of their communion and society, it might be known throughout all the provinces of Africa, how they have been overcome by miserable error, holding different opinions; "that perchance," as the Apostle says, when we have corrected them with gentleness, "God should grant them repentance for the acknowledging of the truth"⁴

In this way, the *converging tendencies in Christology* of more recent times better serve the cause of unity and could be made the basis for a *converging movement in ecclesiology*, where the constant criterion would be a common understanding of the *christocentric ontology* of the Church and of the work of the Holy Spirit within the Church.

⁴ 66th Canon of the Synod of Carthage.

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Reviews

The Orthodox Liturgy: The Development of the Eucharistic Liturgy in the Byzantine Rite. By Hugh Wybrew. Foreword by Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia. Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1990. Pp. xi + 189. \$9.95, soft.

Published in 1989 in Great Britain by the SPCK, Hugh Wybrew's *Orthodox Liturgy* has now been made available in the United States by St. Vladimir's Seminary Press at a very reasonable price. Hugh Wybrew, the former Dean of St. George's Anglican Cathedral in Jerusalem, and now Canon of St. Mary Magdalene's, Oxford, pursued studies at St. Sergius Theological Institute in Paris and has had wide experience with the Orthodox Church. His book on the Orthodox Liturgy is specifically aimed at North American audiences, both Orthodox and non-Orthodox. Written from the perspective of a Western Christian who has intensively studied the history and the practice of the liturgy, Canon Wybrew asks: "How did a rite which claims to go back to the early Church come to assume a form so different from what we know of early Christian worship?" and, "Might the Western Churches have something to learn from the eucharistic worship of Orthodoxy?" (p. 11). He spends most of his book answering the first question, with some suggestions for responding briefly to the second.

The Orthodox Liturgy, based on an extensive study of the original sources, integrates iconography and church architecture into a detailed study of the liturgy, and embraces eight closely written chapters on (1) "The Western Eucharist and Orthodox Liturgy"; (2) "The Sources of the Tradition"; (3) "The Fourth Century"; (4) "The Eucharist at Constantinople in the Time of John Chrysostom"; (5) "The Liturgy in the Time of Maximos the Confessor"; (6) "The Liturgy after the

Victory of the Icons"; (7) "The Byzantine Liturgy in the Eleventh Century"; and (8) "The Completion of the Liturgy," plus an Epilogue, a comparative table of "Life of Christ" Symbolism in the Liturgy, a brief bibliography, a list of illustrations, and an index. There clearly emerges a picture of a Divine Liturgy that developed in significant ways over a period of almost a millenium and a half and was only given its final form in the fifteenth century by Symeon of Thessalonike.

There is no other book in English quite like this one in giving us a total view of the historical and religious development of the Orthodox Liturgy. From the Last Supper, the *First Apology* of Justin, the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus of Rome, the *Didascalia Apostolorum*, to the Alexandrian theologian Origen, from whose teaching about the Christian mystery and the Liturgy developed one strand in the Byzantine tradition of liturgical interpretation and initiation, we are taken through Dionysios the Areopagite in the fifth century and Maximos the Confessor in the Seventh, to Symeon of Thessalonike in the fifteenth. The Clementine Liturgy provides a reasonable guide to the basic form of the Liturgy of Constantinople at the end of the fourth century, and by the end of the fourth the eucharistic memorial of Jesus, like the Paschal celebration, was beginning to be understood more in a dramatic and historical way, and less in a sacramental one. By the mid-sixth century certain prayers in eucharistic and baptismal liturgies were beginning to be recited in an inaudible voice. By the time of Maximos the Confessor, "The union which the Eucharist mediates is primarily union with God" (p. 92) and "it is only Christ who can purify us completely, and so prepare us for union with God" (p. 93). The importance of the bishop is stressed because

Having celebrated the mysteries, the bishop divides and distributes the bread, and shares the chalice among all. So he mysteriously divides and distributes the unity, in which the most holy sacrifice is consummated, and to which the communicants are conformed. The act of Communion sums up in its symbolism the whole economy of our salvation. The divine Word leaves his mysterious sanctuary and descends to our lowly level because of his love for us. He unites human nature with himself without absorbing it, and so, being in his own nature one and indivisible, he shares our fragmented nature. But he does so only so that we might share his own life and unity with God (p. 94).

Maximos, we learn, was the first commentator to give an inter-

pretation of the church building as well as of the Liturgy that is celebrated in it. For Maximos, the Church (composed of souls rather than stones) is an image of God himself; is a kind of icon composed of people; is an image of the visible, tangible world; represents man and is his image and likeness; and is also the image of the soul by itself. The ultimate result of the active and contemplative life is the soul's divinization, symbolized by the mystery celebrated on the holy altar: "So the church is the symbol both of God's condescension in love for man and of man's attempt to find God. In it the mystery and mysticism meet, to effect man's divinization in union with God" (p. 97). The soul, having embraced the principles of both sensible and intelligible things through the Word will comprehend the One God, one nature and three Persons, unity of essence in three persons and consubstantial trinity of persons; trinity in unity and unity in trinity; not one and the other, or one without the other, or one through the other, or one in the other, or one from the other, but the same in itself and by itself and next to itself, the same with itself . . . one, single, undivided, unconfused, simple, undiminished, and unchangeable divinity, completely one in essence and completely three in persons, and sole ray shining in the single form of one triple-splendoured light (p. 100). Through his *Mystagogia*, the first Byzantine work of its kind, Maximos helped to bring about a tradition and popularized a way of understanding and living the Liturgy that not only had special appeal to monastics but became an accepted part of Orthodox Christianity.

It was Patriarch of Constantinople Germanos I (715-730) who through his *Ecclesiastical History* brought into the Byzantine tradition of liturgical interpretation, largely Alexandrian in its inspiration to this point, the historical approach of the Antiochian school. His *Ecclesiastical History* is the first fully Byzantine commentary on the Liturgy, dominated neither by Alexandrians nor by Antiochenes, expounding the essential significance of the Liturgy as a sacramental celebration in which the memorial of Christ's sacrifice is made, and the reality of the future Kingdom, which has been already inaugurated, is anticipated.

By the eleventh century, the Liturgy of the Great Church of Constantinople, which had become the Byzantine Liturgy, could more properly be described as *the Orthodox Liturgy*. Nicholas, Bishop of Andida in Pamphylia, between 1054 and 1067, wrote the *Protheoria*, who unsatisfied with confining liturgical symbolism to the passion, death, and resurrection of Christ, as Germanos had done, saw the Liturgy as a representation of the birth and early life of Christ, intending to demonstrate that the Liturgy represents the whole life of

Christ, while at the same time recognizing the sacramental reality of Communion. Nicholas' treatise had considerable influence on later writers.

Canon Wybrew clearly and correctly points out that the Byzantine tradition of liturgical exposition culminated in two writers, Nicholas Kabasilas, the lay theologian of the fourteenth century, and Symeon, a monk of the fifteenth century who later became Archbishop of Thessalonike in 1416/1417 and died in 1429. Kabasilas wrote *The Life of Christ* and a *Commentary on the Liturgy*, and Symeon an *Interpretation of the Church and the Liturgy* and *On the Holy Liturgy*. The former retains the interpretation of the rite that originated with the Antiochene School. The latter regarded himself as one of the last of the disciples of Dionysios the Areopagite and belonged to the Alexandrian tradition represented by Maximos the Confessor. For Kabasilas, the essential commemoration of Christ is sacramental and real, not symbolic. Kabasilas insists that he finds the basic meaning of the Liturgy in:

The essential act in the celebration of the holy mysteries in the transformation of the elements into the divine Body and Blood; its aim is the sanctification of the faithful, who through these mysteries receive the remission of their sins and the inheritance of the Kingdom of heaven. As preparation for, and contribution to, this act and for this purpose, we have prayers, psalms, and readings from the holy Scripture; in short, all the sacred acts and forms which are said and done before and after the consecration of the elements (p. 159).

The Liturgy is means to appeal to our emotions and motivate us to respond to God's love with all our being, as well as to think about the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ and through such contemplation be ourselves sanctified.

For Symeon the Liturgy is shown to be made up of symbols which contain a hidden reality which reveal two orders of reality: (1) foremost, the whole saving economy of God in Christ, his voluntary humbling in his incarnation, passion, and death; (2) his resurrection and glorification, while at the same time fulfilling the Old Testament prefigurations of Christ and anticipation of the ultimate reality of the heavenly Kingdom. Through liturgical contemplation, access is given to a spiritual reality which is Christ as the Word of God, and the human spirit is purified by God's gift of illumination to ascend from the material to the spiritual reality. Through such, progress is made towards understanding the perfect knowledge of the mysteries, which

constitutes the goal of the Christian life. Symeon brought together all the strands which he found in previous Byzantine liturgical expositions. Symeon capably combined them "into a complex, if not always consistent, pattern of liturgical exposition, which became after Symeon's synthesis part of the unquestioned heritage of the Orthodox Christian tradition" (p. 171).

Hugh Wybrew raises the question of what to Westerners might seem to be a lack of participation in the Liturgy by the laity—the observation that Orthodox worshipers are the passive spectators of a clericalized rite, but cautions that "There is a participation in worship which is contemplative rather than active . . . There is a contemplative quality about the Liturgy and other Orthodox services from which Western Christians may have something to learn" (p. 179). "Perhaps something of the contemplative quality of Orthodox worship could impart to Western worship a dimension it has either never had, or is in danger of losing" (p. 180). Clearly the Orthodox Church preserves the primacy of worship in its Christian life, and that is, as Hugh Wybrew points out, surely a necessary witness.

The Orthodox Liturgy is a splendid book that will certainly illuminate Orthodox and non-Orthodox alike about a subject that has been and is absolutely central to an Orthodox Christian's life.

John Rexine

Spirit of Truth: The Origins of Johannine Pneumatology. Vol. I. By John Breck. Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1991. Pp. xvi + 188. \$10.95, soft.

Spirit of Truth: The Origins of Johannine Pneumatology is the first volume in a two volume project on "The Holy Spirit in Johannine Tradition," the second volume of which will be called *The Spirit-Paraclete in Johannine Tradition* by the V. Rev. John Breck, editor of *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, author of *The Power of the Word* (1986), and Associated Professor of New Testament and Ethics at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary. The present study is a complete reworking of the author's doctoral thesis submitted to the Ruprecht-Karl Universität, Heidelberg, Germany in 1972 and in its present form is addressed "especially to students, pastors, and interested lay persons who wish to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the role played by the Spirit of God throughout the Old Testament and intertestamental periods" (p. viii). At the same time, Father Breck believes that his work will be useful to scholars

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The Relevance of the Seventh Ecumenical Synod

AUREL JIVI

AS HAS BEEN THE CASE OF THE PREVIOUS ECUMENICAL SYNODS, THE Seventh Ecumenical Synod of Nicaea (787) was convened for the purpose of removing a profound crisis in the life of the Church: the emergence of Iconoclasm.

Even though the crisis developed at a time when Byzantium could boast of no outstanding achievements in the field of art, Iconoclasm was more a theological problem, and, to a lesser degree, an issue of religious art. From the very beginning, church leaders and theologians opposed to Iconoclasm sensed the problem's christological dimension and built their defenses around a strong christological foundation.

As early as 692 a warning signal was sent out through the eighty-second canon of the Quinisext Council. This canon's negative attitude towards symbolic representations of Christ laid the groundwork for Orthodox arguments in support of icons.¹

In issuing his decree of 726, which is generally acknowledged to have been the act that triggered the iconoclastic crises, Emperor Leo III enjoyed the backing of several bishops, particularly from Asia Minor, but not the support of the people. A contemporary art historian states that "the iconoclastic party was a court party, which was doctrinaire and imbued with intellectualism. It was not possible that the people, who for two centuries had been accustomed to honor icons, be now made to worship a God that nobody could depict. Only those of the higher strata of society, who were inclined towards abstract speculation, could worship such a God and believe in him, but not the masses."²

Confronted with this situation the Church produced both lumi-

¹John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes*, (New York, 1987) pp. 44-45.

²Victor Lazarev, *Istoria picturii bizantine* (Bucharest, 1980) 1, p. 222.

naries and heroes. At the time of Leo's ascension to the throne of Constantinople, the Patriarchal See of the capital was occupied by Germanos (715-730), who even before the outbreak of Iconoclasm was likening icons to a confession of the faith. The patriarch's opposition to Leo's religious policy led to his removal from office.

In those times, when few of the church faithful were prepared to meet the challenge posed by the imperial policy because of unfavorable political circumstances, a monk of Saint Sabbas' Monastery, near Jerusalem, became the leading defender of Orthodoxy. This was Saint John of Damascus who wrote three treatises against the Iconoclasts. Underlying his first treatise is a strong Christological argument: "I represent God, the Invisible One, not as invisible, but insofar as he has become visible for us by participation in flesh and blood."³ This, and all his other arguments will from now on figure prominently in the development of the Church's doctrine on icons.

As they lagged behind in the formulation of an articulate doctrine, the iconoclasts tried to catch up to the Orthodox. That task was more clearly pursued in the time of Constantine V (741-775) who convened a council at Hieria in 754. Acknowledging the Christological dimension of the issue, participants in the council claimed to be in line with the Church's teaching and accused the iconophiles of the heretical charges of Nestorianism and Monophysitism. The iconoclasts also stated their readiness to accept the Eucharist as the only icon of Christ. These arguments found credibility with certain people, but were rejected from the outset by the Orthodox who sensed the danger contained in such statements.⁴

Associating the Eucharist with this issue was not accidental but rather reflected the degree to which iconoclasm had effected the entire corpus of the church's teaching. There existed, for example, a close connection between the rejection of icons and a disregard for the saints. It has been pointed out that, among the iconoclasts, there were some who, though opposed to icons of the saints, were nevertheless prepared to accept the Lord's icon and that of his holy Mother. "Such a position was, then, directed not against images but against the saints, and it was on this ground that the Orthodox responded to it."⁵

The Iconoclastic crisis was, therefore, no exception to the pattern followed by heretical developments, most of which often con-

³Saint John of Damascus, PG 94.1236C, in Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, p. 45.

⁴Ibid. p. 44.

⁵Jaroslav Pelican, *The Spirit of Eastern Christendom, 600-1700* (Chicago and London, 1974) p. 111.

tained a variety of trends and nuances and were hardly to be regarded as one body.

If, during the reign of Constantine V, theologically qualified people were not able to produce treatises against the new heresy, this void was filled by the Orthodox who found other ways in which to express opposition to imperially sponsored Iconoclasm. Those who dared to call the emperor "a new Valens" and "a new Julian" were severely persecuted, some were even executed; these were mostly monastics. At one point in time, 342 monks were held in the praetorian prison of Constantinople. Refusal to pledge not to venerate icons produced a number of martyrs, of whom we mention Stephen the Neomartyr, Andrew of Crete, Paul of Crete, John of Managria, and Paul the Neomartyr.

Better times started to dawn for the Church in 775 with the ascension of Leo IV, son of Constantine V, to the throne of Constantinople. Leo IV showed great reluctance in persecuting the Orthodox. His wife, Irene, was an Iconophile and, after Leo's death in 780, she paved the way for the restoration of Orthodoxy, effected in the Seventh Ecumenical Synod of 787.

The historical events of the Seventh Ecumenical Synod and its theological aspects have been extensively dealt with in the earlier presentations. Suffice it to recall the important distinction which the dogmatic definition of the council made between προσκύνησις (veneration) and λατρεία (adoration).⁶

The rejoicing of the Orthodox, however, was short-lived, as iconoclasm, which was considered to have been forever done with, reemerged less than half a century later. Its resurgence occurred during the reign of Leo V, who, in 815, convened the Second Iconoclastic council which abrogated the decisions of the Seventh Ecumenical Synod and reinstated those of Hieria. On the positive side, this second phase of iconoclasm helped to expand Orthodox doctrine on the subject.

The chief defenders of the veneration of icons during the second phase of the iconoclastic crisis were a monk and a patriarch: Saint Theodore the Studite and Saint Nikephoros. The famous abbot of the Studios Monastery insisted, insofar as the icon of Christ was concerned, upon distinguishing between nature and hypostasis; the icon represents the divine and human hypostasis of Christ and not one or the other of his two natures. He went on to say that "an indescribable Christ would be an incorporeal Christ."⁷

⁶For a full presentation of the definition see J. Hefele-D. Leclercq, *Histoire des Conciles*, 3, 2 (Paris, 1910) pp. 772-73.

⁷Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, p. 48.

The Lord's describability as a basic argument in favor of his iconographic representation, was also emphasized by Saint Nikephoros who spoke of the fullness of the human nature assumed by the Logos.

The Fathers who labored to provide the Church with a strong defense against iconoclasm singled out as the main deficiency of this heresy its one-sidedness. Like all heretical trends, it stressed one aspect of the Church's faith over and against another. In opposition to this, the methodology validated by ecumenical synods was one that managed to discover *coincidentia oppositorum* and to reconcile and strike a balance between extreme positions, as truth cannot be contained by any unilateral position. Truth in matters of faith is paradoxical in nature and expressed through a union of opposites. Thus, for example, we affirm that God is one and triune at the same time, that Christ is both God and man, and that salvation is achieved through divine grace and human effort.⁸ Likewise, "everything is paradoxical in the world of icons. It is a union of opposites, a union of all the aspects of reality . . . In the icon of the crucifixion, for instance, Christ's body bears the sign of nails but is not torn apart by them or overcome by death."⁹

In light of what has been said in this conference, it is obvious that what was gained through the victory of Orthodoxy at the Seventh Ecumenical Synod in 787 and 843 was not simply the right to continue to paint icons and have them exposed in churches and private homes.

If, contrary to all reason, victory had been on the side of the iconoclasts, we would not, today, merely have an Orthodox Church denied of icons, relics and monasticism. The whole theology of the Church would be different. The Iconoclasts' Christology was definitely influenced by Nestorianism and Monophysitism. Their understanding of the relation between material and spiritual was Manichean in that they rejected the compability of spirit and matter. The one-sided spirituality professed by them would have dramatically affected the entire sacramental life and teaching of the Church. We know from the theology expounded by the Council of Hieria with respect to the Eucharist and the veneration of saints that this is not a simple presupposition. The Church's relation to the world, on the other hand, would have been essentially different.

Having said all this, we realize that the relevance of the icon is discovered only within the context of the entire life of the Church

⁸Dimitru Staniloae, "The Second Ecumenical Synod and Its Importance for Christian Unity," *Romanian Orthodox Church News*, 2 (1981) no. 1, p. 11.

⁹Idem, *Spiritualitate si comuniune in Liturgia ortodoxa* (Craiova, 1986) p. 80.

and in the Church. It is within this context that the icon becomes theophanic and the sustainer of communion. It is here, again, that the icon not only reveals God, but also sheds light upon the world. The icon is the transfigured dimension of that which it reveals and, thus, represents a shining window towards the *eschaton*.

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The Theology of The Icon

NICHOLAS OZOLINE

AS WE APPROACH THE VERY DAYS OF THE TWELVE-HUNDRETH anniversary of the Seventh Ecumenical Council (787), we become aware once again that one of the lasting results of this synod was to make clear that any kind of theological approach to Christian images has to deal first with the icon of Christ. Consequently, the true meaning of all other icons depends upon the accurate understanding of the icon of Christ.

As Father John Meyendorff once put it:

The theological issue between the Orthodox and the Iconoclasts was fundamentally concerned with the icon of Christ, for belief in the divinity of Christ implied a stand on the crucial point of God's essential indescribability and on the Incarnation, which made him visible. Thus the icon of Christ is the icon 'par excellence' and implies a confession of faith in the Incarnation.¹

As the fundamental dogmatic fact of Christianity, the Incarnation is directly related to triadology and anthropology, being itself the very subject of Christology. In all three fields the notion of image appears to be essential for a correct understanding of the Orthodox icon. Let us begin with a few words about the concept of image in triadology.

The Son, the Consubstantial Image of the Father

Having just recently overcome the threat of external persecution by the Roman state, the Church had to face almost immediately her first major inner crisis and doctrinal struggle—the Arian controversy.

¹J. Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology — Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes* (New York, 1979) p. 5.

In the elaboration of anti-Arian argumentation, the notion of "image" significantly caught the attention of the Orthodox. Was it not Saint Paul who said about Christ quite straightforwardly: "Ὁς ἐστὶν εἰκὼν τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου," "He is the image of the invisible God" (Col 1.15-2; Cor 4.4). And according to John 14.9, the Lord himself was not less clear when he answered Philip, saying "He who sees me, sees the Father."

What could these words mean in the system of the Alexandrian heresiarch? "As well as he is monad and principle of all, as well God before all. This is why he is even before the Son."² Such was the fundamental idea and the leitmotiv of Arius' thought. Actually, there was no place for the Christian Triad, since the God of Arius remained a monad and even a "closed monad"—"only God, only unbegotten, only eternal, only without beginning, only true, only immortal, only wise, only good, only mighty."³ "He is alone not to have someone equal, neither alike nor of the same glory."⁴

In such a system, the Son as image of the Father is reduced to radical dissemblance, i.e., to the absolute difference that separates creature from the creator. The only known text in which Arius speaks about the image mentions this clearly: "Understand," he states, "that there was the monad and that the dyad was not before coming into existence. Thus when the Son is not, the Father is God. And now the Son, who was not (since he began to exist by the will of his Father), is the only-begotten God and stranger. He is thus conceived according to thousands and thousands of thoughts, as spirit, power, wisdom, glory of God, truth, image, and word."⁵ Being neither equal, nor coeternal, nor consubstantial with the Father, the Son cannot possibly be considered the Father's perfect image, who could fully reveal him, since "the Son has nothing belonging to God that belongs to him."⁶ We have here an understanding of God that "destroys the true transcendancy of 'the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,' a transcendancy that implies," as von Schönborn observes, "the ability to give himself entirely to the Son and to the Spirit, without any harm to his proper sovereignty."⁷

As everybody knows, the answer of the Church has crystallized in the term *ὁμοούσιος*, introduced in the newly-composed Nicene creed,

²Quoted by Saint Athanasios, *De Synodis* 16, PG 26.708D.

³Ibid. 26.708D.

⁴Ibid. 26.705D.

⁵Ibid. 26.708AB.

⁶Ibid. 26.705D-08A.

⁷Chr. v. Schönborn, *L'icone du Christ, Fondements théologiques* (Paris, 1986) p. 24.

that became from then on the banner of Orthodoxy. During the anti-Arian struggle, the most fiery defender of the "Faith of Nicea," Saint Athanasios the Great, worked out the ecclesial doctrine of the image as a technical term in triadology. For him, the Son is the Father's consubstantial image. "When you speak about the image, you mean the Son, because who else could be like God, if not the Begotten One."⁸ Fatherhood, as one of the fundamental characteristics of the first Person of the Holy Trinity, is revealed to us by the Son, explains Saint Athanasios. Paternity is one of the few positive affirmations at our disposal about the Father, one of those that permit us to name him. Before all beginning and all eternity, the first Person of the Trinity is Father of his Son, (who is also without beginning and coeternal), Father of the consubstantial *Logos*. But since the quality of Father and Son signifies the identity of essence, it also concerns the concept of image when it is applied to the Person of the Holy Trinity. This is why Saint Athanasios says: "The Father is eternal, immortal, strong, light, almighty, God, Lord, creator, and producer. All these features have to be found in the image so that it may be true that he who sees the Son sees the Father (Jn 14.9); if on the contrary, as the Arians hold it, the Son is created and not eternal, there is no true image of the Father."⁹

The word "image," used by the Scriptures to speak about the Son, has to be lifted as it were to a higher level than the one of common language and secular philosophy. Only in the high spheres of divine revelation does it become possible to conceive the new concept of the Son as consubstantial image of the paternal prototype.

This new concept quickly became commonplace in patristic triadology. As one of many possible examples, let us quote Saint Basil the Great who poses the notion of image in his famous treatise "On the Holy Spirit" by imitation and likeness through what is common, on a trinitarian level: "What the image is there by imitation, the Son is here by nature. And just as in art the likeness depends on the form, concerning divine nature which is simple, it is in the community of divinity that the principle of unity resides."¹⁰

Vladimir Lossky expresses the same idea with the following words:

the Son, the image of the Father, does not manifest "the person of the Father but his nature, identical in the Son. It is identity of essence which is shown in the difference of persons: the Son, in his function of *εἰκών*, bears witness to the

⁸Saint Athanasios, *De Decretis* 17, PG 25.444C.

⁹Saint Athanasios, *First Speech against the Arians* 21, PG 26.56A.

¹⁰Saint Basil the Great, *On the Holy Spirit* 18, PG 32.149C.

divinity of the Father. . . . One ought, in order to prevent any ambiguity, to speak of the 'natural image' as did Saint John of Damascus,¹¹ for whom the Son is an εἰκών φυσική, 'complete, in everything like the Father, excepting the characteristics of unbegottenness and fatherhood.' "¹²

Thus we have reached the ultimate source of all Christian veneration of images: "The Son is in the Father as the beauty of the image resides in the archetypal form. . . . The Father is in the Son as the archetypal beauty remains in its image," declares Gregory of Nyssa.¹³

However, in order to prevent serious misunderstandings concerning icon theology, we have to emphasize immediately that this "nature of the Father that is identical in the Son," remains as such always invisible and thus also indescribable or uncircumscribable in the sense of unrepresentable and non-depictable. Saint Athanasios himself is very strict on this point. He indicates, of course, that among the characteristics and attributes that the image and the archetype have in common according to their divine οὐσία is invisibility: "The Image of the invisible God is an invisible Image," he states.

Thus the concept of the "consubstantial image" belongs exclusively to triadology and belongs strictly to the divine sphere of intratrinitarian relations. By no means may this concept be considered the first link of a long chain of images descending, as it were, from a sort of divine Ungrund and the supracelestial regions to the level of our optical perception and a painted reproduction. As the "essential" or "natural" image of the Father, the Son remains on the trinitarian level strictly invisible and thus ἀπερίγραπτος—indescribable or uncircumscribable, because the ἀπεριγραψία—indescribability, is an attribute of the Father's divine nature which He shares with the Son.¹⁴ In the economy of salvation, the Son as consubstantial image of the Father reveals to the world this common divinity in His person. Later when we shall try to answer the question of who is represented and representable in the icon of Christ, we shall do well

¹¹Saint John of Damascus, *De imaginibus* 3, 18, PG 94.1340AB.

¹²Vladimir Lossky, "The Theology of the Image," *In the Image and Likeness of God* (Crestwood, 1974), p. 135.

¹³Saint Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomium*, PG 44.636.

¹⁴This is an important argument against the sophiological iconology of Serge Boulgakov who denies precisely this indescribability, positing that the fathers of Nicaea II simply took over an iconoclastic argument without understanding its true implications. See N. O. Sergius, "La doctrine boulgakoviennede la 'descriptibilité' de Dieu a la lumière de la théologie orthodoxe de l' icône," *Colloque Boulgakov, Le Messager orthodoxe*, 98 (1985).

to remember that this Person remains, even after the Incarnation, the hypostasis of the divine Word.

However, let us return to the victory over Arianism. One of the major consequences of this victory was to maintain not only the sheer possibility of Christian art but more particularly its specificity. The special task assigned to Christian artists was to find more and more adequate forms to represent the descent of God into his creation as well as the "transfiguring" consequences of this coming. In other words, victory over Arianism was a necessary presupposition for the creation of what we call the specific Christian style.

After these short remarks about the concept of image in triadology, we may now turn to anthropology.

The Image and Likeness of God in Man—Natural Gift and Personal Task

The Septuagint, the authoritative version of the Old Testament of the Greek-speaking East through the witness of the *consensus patrum* and the liturgy, remains for us an important testimony in the history of revelation. In Genesis 1.26 we read: "God said: let us make man κατ' εἰκόνα ἡμετέραν καὶ καθ' ὁμοίωσιν—according to our image and our likeness."

The Image of God

According to patristic commentators, this verse indicates first of all that the *imago dei* is an ontological reality in man and implies a particular relation between God and humanity, an unalienable and indestructible attribute of human nature so willed by the divine Creator. Thus the human being is not created for autonomous and self-sufficient life, but rather for participation in divine life; it is only "in God" that he can realize his original destination. Nothing is more "natural" for man than to live and grow in grace. Far from opposing each other, nature and grace expressed in such an approach express the life giving dynamics of the relationship between the Creator and his creation. Although radically different according to their essence, both nature and grace live in a communion that not only ignores the fateful opposition between them, but also considers this divine grace and her uncreated energies to be the most natural "milieu" of human existence. The Fathers used to understand the biblical teaching about the Garden of Eden precisely in this sense, as dealing with the "Church of Paradise," according to Saint Gregory Palamas.¹⁵ Fr. John Meyendorff refers to this state as "open anthropology." Contrasting the notion of the almost neutral and closed

¹⁵Saint Gregory Palamas, *Triads* 1, 1, 9, ed. J. Meyendorff (Louvain, 1959), p. 27.

natura pura of scholasticism, Fr. John describes man created literally in "the state of grace," naturally open to God in terms of communion and synergy. Such a vision of natural and God-willed holiness of human existence is ultimately founded on the biblical doctrine of the image of God in man. In other words, we have to see Adam as being adorned with the first created image of God. Genesis 1.27 says this clearly: "God created man in his image, in the image of God created He him, male and female created He them. . . ."

Reflecting various tendencies of patristic thought, different Fathers have tried to locate more precisely God's image in man. Some of them, like Gregory of Nyssa, have been influenced—through Origen—by Neoplatonism and its concept of *συγγένεια*. To them, the intellect (*νοῦς*) appeared most appropriate both for the "localization" and the expression of this "community of origin." Others, like Irenaeus of Lyons with his soteriology of "recapitulation in Christ—the new Adam," or Palamas, consider, in line with biblical realism, that not only the spirit and the soul participate in this quality of image, but the human body as well.¹⁶ Thus Saint Gregory Palamas says: "The word 'man' is not applied to either soul or body separately, but to both together, since together they have been created in the image of God."¹⁷ Vladimir Lossky clearly agrees, saying: "The human person is not a part of man, any more than the Persons of the Trinity are parts of God. That is why the character of the image of God does not belong to any one part of the human make-up, but refers to the whole of human nature in its entirety."¹⁸ Just as the salvation offered to humanity through Christ's incarnation and resurrection concerns the totality of human nature without excluding the body, the character of God's image concerning the same totality has to include corporeality. Incidentally, this understanding is clearly implied in the traditional doctrine of the bodily resurrection of the dead.¹⁹

However, to go further and try to define what precisely constitutes God's image does not seem possible because, as Gregory of Nyssa explains, the image of God in man is necessarily unknowable (and thus uncircumscribed and indescribable!—N. O.). As it reflects the fullness of its archetype, it must also possess the unknowable character of the divine being. "We can only conceive it through the idea of participation in the infinite goodness of God,"²⁰ says Lossky.

¹⁶As we shall see, this consideration of course has no anthropomorphic implications.

¹⁷Saint Gregory Palamas, PG 150.1361C.

¹⁸Vladimir Lossky, *Mystical Theology* (Crestwood) p. 115.

¹⁹See G. Florovsky, "The Resurrection of the Dead," in Russian (Paris, 1935) pp. 135-67.

²⁰Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, p. 113.

Thus we have reached likeness. It was necessary to speak at some length about the inalienable and unfathomable image of God, that which ultimately establishes the mystery of every human being, because likeness presupposes the image just as chrismation presupposes baptism. Hence, likeness understood as perfecting the image is obviously of paramount importance for icon theology.

The Likeness

Likeness is accomplished by and in the Holy Spirit. "The Word," writes Saint Athanasios the Great, "gave us the premises of the Spirit, so that we might become the sons of God according to the image of the Son of God."²¹ In Christ the undistorted image of God is restored to the nature common to all human beings. In baptism this restoration is achieved for each believer personally, through the death of the old Adam and the resurrection in Christ. The Holy Spirit enables all those who are recreated κατ' εἰκόνα, according to the Image—those who have risen from the baptismal waters as from the dead—to continue to perfect more and more the likeness of their newly restored images to the archetype who is Christ. Diadochos of Photike describes this process by referring explicitly to the work of an artist:

Just as the painters first trace the sketch of the portrait with a single color, and then adding by and by one color to the other precise the portrait's likeness to its model . . . in the same way in baptism the grace of God begins to restore the image as it was when the person came into existence. Then when she sees us aspiring with all our will to the beauty of likeness . . . adding one virtue to the other, raising the soul's beauty from glory to glory, grace acquires for her the mark of likeness."²²

Christ includes the nature common to the multitude of human beings in his one divine hypostasis. The Holy Spirit distributes his divine nature, shared in common with the Father and the Son, to the multitude of human hypostases. V. Lossky describes this "self-distribution" of the Spirit, saying:

The Holy Spirit effaces himself, as person, before the created persons to whom he appropriates grace. In him the will of God

²¹Saint Athanasios, PG 26.997A.

²²Diadochos of Photike, *Spiritual Works* 89, in H. de Lubac and J. Daniélou, eds. *Sources Chrétiennes* 5 (Paris, 1955) p. 149.

is no longer external to ourselves: it confers grace inwardly, manifesting itself within our very person in so far as our human will remains in accord with the divine will and cooperates with it in acquiring grace, in making it *ours*. This is the way of deification leading to the kingdom of God which is introduced into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, even in this present life. For the Holy Spirit is the sovereign unction resting upon the Christ and upon all the Christians called to reign with him in the age to come. It is then that this divine Person, now unknown, not having his image in another hypostasis, will manifest himself in deified persons: for the multitude of the saints will be his image."²³

Now let us have a closer look at all these anointed ones: Christ and the multitude of saints that we represent in icons. What is the icon of a saint? It is the image of a person who has realized holiness, the image of him who through acquiring the Holy Spirit bears His fruits, the handmade image consequently of him who has fully used the possibilities received by the total restoration of God's image in him through baptism.

The icon strives to represent realized likeness. The specific Christian image shows the "natural" and God-willed holiness of a creature who has found his way back to communion with the Creator and has fully realized that communion. In this case something happens to the old tough Adam, and this transformation has to be shown, not the temptation or the struggle, but the final result, the peace in the Lord which is nothing but adoration and glorification. True sacred art shows this accomplished change, this achieved salvation, and this transformation by God and in God of the fallen and mortal world; in a word, it shows transfiguration. Indeed, he who labors at his likeness labors at the transfiguration of the world.

To say with Saint Seraphim of Sarov that "the sense of human life is to acquire the Holy Spirit" is to say that the meaning of life is to realize oneself fully as a human being, because this is only possible "in God." A human person resembles Christ in proportion to how fully one acquires the Holy Spirit, because it is he who manifests Christ and obtains him for humanity. Thus it is really the Holy Spirit who accomplishes the divine likeness in man.

The third and last field I shall address at least in brief, from the point of view of icon theology is Christology.

²³Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, p. 169.

Theopaschism—A Necessary Presupposition for a Correct Understanding of the Icon of Christ

What triadology had been for the First Council of Nicea (325), Christology was for the Council of Chalcedon (451). If the Church after Nicea first had to "digest" the ὁμοούσιος doctrine, then one may say the same about the doctrine of the "two natures in one person."

The issue was first of all to preserve the fundamentally soteriological intuition of Saint Cyril of Alexandria who formulated his inspiration into the expression, "The Word has suffered in the flesh." Already the expression Θεωτόκος, proclaimed at the Council of Ephesus (431), that assumes, according to Saint John of Damascus, the whole economy of salvation into one word, was meant to indicate that there is no other subject in Christ than the Logos.

The issue was the necessary personal identity of the pre-eternal and beginningless Word with the Logos incarnate, the identity that had been as it were presupposed in the Nicene Creed, and that was particularly clearly expressed in the hymn "ὁ μονογενὴς υἱὸς καὶ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ" that we still sing at every liturgy: "Only-begotten Son and immortal Word of God, . . . who without change didst become man and was crucified, O Christ God trampling down death by death, who art One of the Holy Trinity, glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit save us."

In his book *Christ in Eastern Christian thought*, Fr. John Meyendorff states:

The pre-existent Word is the subject of the death of Christ, for in Christ there is no other personal subject apart from the Word: only someone can die, not something, or a nature, or the flesh. . . . The Fifth Council, by fully rehabilitating the Cyrillian concept of the unity of subject in Christ, focused attention on the great importance of the hypostatic unity of the incarnate Word."²⁴

In the same order of ideas, Fr. Georges Florovsky would insist upon the "asymmetrical" character of Orthodox Christology. Christology is "asymmetrical" because, as opposed to divine nature, there is no proper hypostasis corresponding to the human nature in Christ; this nature has its person in the divine hypostasis corresponding to the human nature in Christ; this human nature has its person in the divine hypostasis and is included in it; that is, "enhypostasized." This however does not mean that its will and actions are not really human. On the contrary, it is

²⁴J. Meyendorff, *Christ in Eastern Christian Thought*, pp. 72, 84-85.

precisely the concept of the hypostasis that allows Orthodox theology to safeguard in its understanding of the incarnate God the positive intuition of Antiochene thought and the Tome of Leo, that "every nature keeps its proper way of being."

This is why the classical "theopaschite" formula, "One of the Holy Trinity has suffered in the flesh," seems to me essential for icon theology, and now, we may ask our ultimate question: What is describable in Christ?

On the trinitarian level, the Son as consubstantial image of the Father bears witness to the divinity of the Father. This divinity remains evidently always invisible.

In the incarnate Word, divine nature consubstantial with the Father remains of course also invisible.

But his nature, received from his Mother and consubstantial with us, having no proper hypostasis and being "enhypostasized" by the Word, keeps the characteristic of describability proper to its nature, just as it has, for instance, kept its human will.

God's image in Christ's human nature is fully restored, but remains invisible and thus indescribable, reflecting in this the unknowability of the archetype.

The divine likeness of Christ's transfigured humanity is total, not by grace, but, if I may say so, "according to his divine person."

Indeed, unlike in the case of the saints, here the Holy Spirit does not need to "accomplish" a person since the person who assumes the human nature of the New Adam is the divine hypostasis of the Word himself.

The transfigured but nevertheless describable human body of Christ, consubstantial with us, is therefore perfect likeness because it is "enhypostasized" in the total and perfectly theophanic holy person of the Word. Christ's flesh, deified but nevertheless describable, shows us the person of the Word, because perfect likeness can only be totally personal.

To sum up these observations, I would use the language of the Fifth Ecumenical Council (533) and say that the phrase, "God has suffered in the flesh and he died on the Cross," can be restated in the following way: "One of the Holy Trinity has become describable in the flesh, and we paint the image of his divine person."

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Theology as Diakonia to Christ and His Church

GEORGE BEBIS

A GOOD FRIEND OF MINE RELATED TO ME THE FOLLOWING STORY. When he was still young, but already known as a promising professor of theology, he was attending an important theological conference in Europe. It was a weekday, and an Orthodox priest was asked to celebrate the Divine Liturgy. The priest was alone in the altar. No altar boys or assistants were available. The young professor approached the altar, humbly and with the fear of the God, and he began to serve the priest. The priest protested: "Professor," he said, "do you serve in the sanctuary?" The professor interrupted and said firmly, "Father, do not forget, that 'theologia is diakonia.' " Indeed theology is service and liturgy and humility and obedience and absolute devotion to the Church and to her liturgical and ever-saving mission.

As we begin the deliberations of the Third International Conference of Orthodox Theological Schools we must meditate and reflect this morning on the great apostolic mission of theology, both as a theoretical gnosiology and as a practical askesis towards Christian perfection. In other words, the question is how Orthodox theology will face the twenty-first century, and how we will confront all the challenges of contemporary technology and the leaping advances of modern-science problems which are of mythological proportions. Should we remain locked in the temple of the Old Testament as formal functionaries of formalistic rubrics? That is the question which is raised by Saint Paul in today's Epistle to the Hebrews (9.1-7). Furthermore, Orthodox theology will have to make the hard choice posed by our Lord Jesus Christ in today's Gospel. Should we become the active Martha or the contemplative Mary in the complex society in which we live today and in the next century when we may face the most complicated problematics that human civilization has ever known.

Saint Justin the Martyr calls Christian theology the only safe philosophy; Saint Gregory of Nyssa, the most sacred philosophy; and, Saint Neilos, the true philosophy of life. But Christian theology is not an easy task. Saint Gregory the Theologian, the Archbishop of Constantinople, knew that very well and he drew our attention to the fact that theology is not certainly for everyone. It requires the theologian himself to ascend step by step the difficult and tortuous ladder of Christian perfection as Saint John of the Ladder so admirably describes. Christian theology must remain biblical and patristic in the sense that it must become both contemplative and practical, liberating and ascetically binding. It must restore in man the divinized person or "prosopon" completely free from sin and demonic powers and free of vanity and spiritual slavery to the forces of this world. Correctly, the new saintly theologian, Justin Popovitch, following Saint Makarios the Egyptian, writes that we theologians must apply in our lives the theandric methodology of life and knowledge which begins from our own spiritual union with God. Or to use the expression of Saint Isaak, we must achieve the simplicity of purity in conjunction with the practice of the Christian virtues of fasting, almsgiving, vigils, humility of heart, purity of the body, love for everyone, forgiveness, and remembrance of heavenly things.

Thus, Orthodox theology must return to its roots in order to become related and relative to the present and to the future. It must build itself as a temple of God through self-knowledge, according to the Makarian language. It must transform itself and the entire body of the Church into persons who live in Christ, and must become all in all: "τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσι Χριστός." Theologians can transform themselves as well as all the people who live in the glorious temple of the Church, into the multi-simplicity of the energies of Christ, the Son of God. Saint Makarios describes these energies so creatively. Christ was and is for us "the tree of life, pearl, crown, builder, passive, impassive, man, God, wine, living water, sheep, bridegroom, fighter, weapon."

So, Orthodox theology can and must become relevant to our times. It must remain both contemplative, ascetic, and practical. And we must pray unceasingly. As Evagrius put it so beautifully . . . "if you are a theologian you should truly pray, and if you truly pray you are a theologian . . ."

And since we celebrate and honor the Virgin Mary today, let us remember what Saint Nikodemos wrote in his "Synaxarion" on Saint Symeon the Theologian. Theologians, and by all means Christians, must become mothers, *meteres Christou*, by the Lord as the Virgin Mary served, humbly and completely. That was the theology of yesterday. This should be the theology of today and tomorrow. In the name of our Lord, we pray. Amen.

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Thinking the Faith. By Douglas John Hall. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1991. Pp. 396

Years ago a story was being told that a renowned churchman was spotted deplaning at a busy airport carrying a copy of D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. However, the churchman was not actually reading that torrid novel; he was using the jacket as a false cover for John Robinson's *Honest to God*. I suspect that similar stories might abound with Douglas John Hall's *Thinking the Faith*.

While Robinson was suggesting the inadequacy of traditional language to express the faith in our present age, Hall is taking a stick to the foundation of the Christian faith itself. His thesis is that the basic Trinitarian and Christological doctrines are products of an era when Christianity became the only lawful religion of the Roman-Byzantine Empire. While Christianity was in "diaspora" and persecuted, it had a very "low" Christology. The present high Christological dogma which places icons of the Christ in the apses and domes of churches and cathedrals with titles such as "Christ in Majesty" and "Pantokrator" is a product of the Constantinian age.

The result of the Church's adoption of this exalted Christology is the intolerance exhibited by the Church towards other religions. The Church considers the faith of others as woefully inadequate with the attendant results: expunging these other faiths.

This intolerance, in Hall's view, made the Holocaust not only possible but inevitable. The Jews had the temerity to resist attempts by the Church to change them from what they were, Israel. Consequently, they have been blamed for every ill that has befallen Western humanity. Similarly, the Church has considered the religion of Native Americans as beneath contempt with the attendant persecution of these peoples as a result. Hall has included paragraphs on the contributions of Constantinian theology to the crises of the environment, nuclear energy, etc. He also includes a chapter on Marxism that should force the Christian to reread history from the viewpoint of the "rejected and humiliated." The quote is from G. Baum footnoted by Hall. He writes that as yet Marxism has not become an alternative to North American Christians, but no thinking Christian today can ignore or discount the Marxist challenge. The book was published in 1989 and I suspect that many of us have written items that in retrospect have been an embarrassment.

Ultimately, "imperial Christianity" must realize that its future

does not lie in the direction of attempting to Christianize the world and that students of the Bible should be the first persons to realize this. The role of the Christian Church is to be a minority, albeit a significant minority, a minority whose quality is to be found in the vision it represents. This version is one of a God who could come so close to us, a God who could care, a God who could love. This is to be the messages of the Christian Church to North America.

There are many questions that Hall's book prompts, and not a few regrets that it generates. How is a biblical scholar to interpret passages such as Psalm 110.1 that Jesus identifies with himself, and 1 Corinthians 15.20-28? Was Saint Paul tolerant of idols? I dare say that religious tolerance was one virtue from which he did not suffer greatly. And if the message of the Church, as Hall understands it, were to be successful, and every knee "bowed" before Christ, would Hall be embarrassed by this obeisance? One suspects that he would.

The regrets are basically two. Hall completely ignores the experience of the Eastern Orthodox Church, the Constantinian Church par excellence, under the Ottomans, and in modern Turkey. We are speaking of a subjugation that lasted four centuries in the Balkans and continues to this date in Istanbul. Why did the Church not feel obliged to change its Christological dogma when faced with its own Holocaust? Thousands upon thousands were massacred, her churches converted into mosques, and the faithful and the faith generally humiliated. Yet it was this faith in the resurrected Christ, the Pantokrator, that sustained and sustains them. Similarly no mention is made of the experience of the Orthodox Church under Russian Marxism. Many "renovations" were proposed by splinter groups encouraged by the Communists following the 1917 Revolution, but all of these changes had to do with administrative matters, the use of vernacular in the services rather than Old Slavonic, but not the faith. While churches were being blown apart, converted into lumber mills, etc., the faithful remained steadfast to the "crucified king of glory." The countries of Eastern Europe never had their Church subjected to the vehemence of the persecution of Lenin, Stalin, or even Krushchev.

Hall's work is the first volume of a projected three volume work. The second will concentrate on the "meditative core" of Christian thinking, and the third will deal with the fundamental Christian credo. No doubt that this work will enliven the discussions of many dialogue groups across the nation.

Theodore H. Chelpon

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Threat of Nuclear Annihilation

VIKTOR PETLUCHENKO

OUR MEETING TAKES PLACE DURING AN EXTREMELY RESPONSIBLE AND tense moment in international relations. The world nears a decisive turning point, when all those living on earth will have to make a choice between life and death, creation and annihilation.

All of humanity is threatened with the real danger of complete annihilation. Nuclear arsenals are constantly increasing and presently contain more than one million bombs similar to that dropped on Hiroshima. "The recent data of the scientists prove that one percent of our present arsenal will be enough to undermine the system of life on earth."¹ Such troubled times do not leave humanity indifferent.

We who believe in God, the Creator of the world, must ask ourselves with all responsibility and understanding on the basis of our Church's teaching: "What is our attitude towards the danger of humanity's nuclear annihilation?" Do we, as Orthodox Christians, need a special call or persuasion to raise our voice in favor of life as opposed to death and the triumph of good over evil? This is not so much for ourselves, but more for others (1 Tim 3.7). It seems worthwhile to consider the following points.

The Causes of Christian Peacemaking

God created the world and abides in it, not only in the sense that God is Pantocrator, that there is no being without him, but in the sense that God abides in the world, directing, administering, and saving it. God loves the world because he himself is love. The very life of God is manifested in love. Moreover, the world is searching for God and looks for his help. This participation of God in the life of the world is usually called "providence." Divine providence is the participation of God in the life of the world, the flow of the currents

¹Paulos Mar Gregorios, Report of the 6th Congress of Peaceloving Forces in Prague, *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, 8 (1985) 48.

of grace which by their nature impart life to the world and determine the creative power of creation.

In the Book of Genesis (1.28 and 2.19-20), it is convincingly said that man is the owner of nature and the center of all earthly being. Thus, without delving deeply into dogmatic research of the place of man in the world, the responsibility for his own life and the providential work of God on earth, it is possible to state that man, completely relying upon the will of God, must at the same time accept the will of God with all his being, absolutely voluntarily, understanding his responsibility for the gift of life which is given to people by God.

According to the Orthodox view, man must be free from the extremes of naturalistic optimism and joyless pessimism. We often live without God, but he is always with us. He is always in the world. This fact does not break the freedom of creation vis-à-vis man, whose main gift is his freedom.

Evil exists in the world. However, aspects of its activity are different, as are the methods of the struggle with evil. Nevertheless, among different manifestations of evil on earth, there is one which presently, at the end of the twentieth century, has gained great and terrible power. This manifestation is war, a power which has always been evil but now, in the age of nuclear power, is evil for all mankind. Opinions on this issue are being voiced by representatives of the world's religions and social structures. For, in the final analysis, God is our hope, peace, unity, and protection. He is the cause of our peacemaking activity.

The Christian Church as a Society of Peacemakers

The Son of God, Christ the Lord, has come to the world in order to save humanity, a humanity which has moved away from God's world and from love towards him. Therefore, it is quite natural that in preparing for the establishment of the Church on earth Christ invited his disciples more than once to create a basis upon which the future Church, as a society of those who follow the commandments of the Old and New Testaments, could facilitate the adoption of its teachings by all followers.² It is the execution of these commandments, in response to the concrete demands of our time, which is the essence of peacemaking.

To love God means first of all to keep his commandments (Jn 14.15). For our Holy Orthodox Church, it is a matter of the authority of the Church as contained in the sources of divine revelation. The Church, according to the Apostle Paul, is the household of God, which

²Dt 6.5, Lev 19.18, Mt 22.37, Mk 12.30, Lk 10.27.

is "the pillar and bulwark of the truth" (1 Tim 3.15). Therefore, by being a member of the Church, each Christian is predestined to be a peacemaker, a creator of peace.

In a talk to his disciples, Christ said, "Be at peace with one another" (Mk 9.50). Saint Mark, by quoting these words of the Savior, expresses them within the context of the Greek understanding of "eireneuete" (be at peace), which has the same root as the well-known word "eirene" (peace). This word means a combination of the inner and outer worlds. That which constitutes the inner world which we believers know is the kingdom of God inside us all. The outer world is in a state of constant harmony with the inner world, in a peaceful life among people: in the family, national society, and among nations.

Throughout its history, beginning with the first days of its existence, Christianity was a communion of people united by the hope to "maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph 4.3). Christian society has never existed in isolation from the country in which it lived, from its earthly fatherland. The early Church was often depicted as indifferent to the world, constantly in a state of tense anticipation of the end times. Already, however, in the very ideal of love and new life incarnated in a church society, a new attitude toward the world is contained, because this love is for Christians not an internal affair of the Church but the essence of its witness in the world.³ Herein lies the necessity for harmony in the consciousness of a Christian peacemaker between love towards his people and fatherland, and a striving for the good of each nation and humanity as a whole.

At different times in different places of the world, a living and active Christian love towards people and the fatherland has been revealed in different ways. There are numerous examples of such Christian patriotism. Christ, with tears, addressed his earthly fatherland, Jerusalem (Lk 19.41-44). Saint Paul grieved for his people (Rom 9.3). The Russian Orthodox Church actively helped its people, the 'Rus,' during the difficult times of the Tartar, Swedish, and German invasions and also contributed to the long-suffering fatherland in the persons of its representatives (thirteenth to seventeenth centuries). Further, the Russian Church was together with its people during the patriotic wars of 1812 and 1941-45. Such examples can also be noted of sister churches within the Orthodox family of autocephalous churches.

As has been mentioned above, Christianity, by its essence, is the religion of peace and belief in God, the highest blessing and love.

³A. Schmemann, *The Historical Road of Eastern Orthodoxy* (Chicago 1963) p. 17.

It is incompatible with the notion of war, as war is the embodiment of evil. The very word "war" means opposition, which in a spiritual sense, can be applied only to the forces of evil. The word "war" in the descriptive sense is often used in the Old Testament in connection with its peculiar dispositions as caused by a remoteness from God's grace. It is then that the voice of the prophet was raised: "Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, 'I am a warrior,' " (Joel 3.10). That was the time of the formation of humanity. Nevertheless, at the same time, one more voice sounded which was preparing humanity for the coming of the Prince of Peace, the great pacifier and conciliator: "He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Is 2.4).

Contemporaneity and the Church

Guided by the teaching of its heavenly creator, the Christian Church has from the first steps of its history to the present stormy days of the twentieth century brought to life the commandments of Christ the Savior about how to live on earth in order that its members, having pleased God, should inherit eternal life.

The Church of Christ, as a society of believers, cannot remain indifferent to events of the present; the joy of all people of the earth is the joy of the Church, and the grief of all people, a concern for the Church. To live in society and to be free from the order which it has established is impossible. Any communion of people, including the religious community, cannot shrink into itself. Its activity influences the life of a society in one way or another.

No one in our nuclear age believes that the question of war and peace can leave anyone indifferent. Due to objective and subjective conditions and efforts, the Christian church, to our great regret, is divided into confessions. Moreover, and quite naturally, the Christian church exercises its saving mission in countries throughout the world with different social systems.

It must be confessed that there was a time when religious workers from different countries sowed discord among Christians, not only socially, but also in the context of religious doctrine. Glory be to God, this was mainly transferred to the sphere of history, and thus, historians of the future will have to study in detail the cause of these divisions.

Taking into account the claims of the present and the demands of life, Orthodoxy has universally declared that the basis of the

responsibilities and behavior of Christians in relation to society and the state must be the support of everything new that contributes to social and moral progress. Service to one's neighbors, commanded by our Savior, means for the Orthodox believers and the Church the practical realization of good will, patriotism, and peacemaking in a concrete situation, e.g., the family, society, the state, the manufacture of material goods and creation of spiritual values, nature, the world — not simply objects of the application of spiritual and moral energy, but everything which each believer is connected with organically, whose inalienable part he himself is.⁴

Here it is impossible to pass by the following question: Are the achievements of science and technology good or evil? On the surface, this question is a rhetorical one, although an attitude towards life stands behind it. So what is good for man on earth, and what is bad?

In our age man, with his mind, conceived of the idea of the use of nuclear power. Even now, after the well-known catastrophes at nuclear power stations, scientists of many countries continue to say that nuclear electricity is the most efficient form of power. While exercising space flights, astronauts from different countries look at our mother earth from spaceships. At the same time on the basis of science and technology, new and unbelievably dangerous, terrible, and destructive means of conducting war are being created.

Thus, on the one side, the achievements of progress are to benefit man, and, on the other side, the same achievements do him harm. What is the answer to this dilemma? Wisdom, for the use of all these achievements of the human mind, is necessary for the world's public progress, no matter what contents it might have, no matter what the class or social position of the approach to the questions of the perspectives of humanity are. This is possible only on the condition of the working out of such forms of public decision making which exclude the way of military conflict and nuclear cataclysm.⁵ Hence, Christians from all countries must certainly stand for disarmament.

The attitude of Christians to the question of disarmament was expressed in one of the peacemaking messages of His Holiness Patriarch Pimen of Moscow and All Russia:

In conditions under which every sixth person in the world is underfed, five million die of starvation annually, every fifth inhabitant of the planet is illiterate, and every third is denied

⁴JMP (1986) 11, p.41.

⁵W. V. Zagladin, *Question of All Questions* (Moscow 1985) p. 270.

even a minimum of medical aid, the squandering of enormous sums on destruction is becoming inadmissible in every respect and should be condemned as a moral evil.

There is only one way out of this dangerous situation: to unite efforts and curb the aggressive plans of reaction and the arms race, while turning the funds thus released to the needs of socio-economic development. The system of deterrence which has not justified itself in any way must be replaced by a system of general security, based on increased confidence.⁶

Threat to Life on Earth from Nuclear War

The existence of weapons for the purpose of mass destruction is a reality. The following statistics must become known to as many people of the earth as possible. During the five thousand-year history of our planet there have been more than 14,500 wars of magnitude on earth. Humanity has lost four billion lives in these wars. In Europe, 3.3 million people died in the seventeenth century. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, losses increased to 4.5 and 5.5 million people respectively. The twentieth century became the bloodiest, with the First and Second World Wars taking 59 million human lives.

Along with these sad statistics, we follow the history of the advancement of war technology. At present this technology, a foul result of human evil, has achieved its height in a direct and indirect sense. Nuclear technology is making its way into space by the aspirations of militarists. Moreover, yet another terrible notion has appeared, "omnicide;" that is, the annihilation of the whole of humanity. This term has not yet been included in many dictionaries and, to date, only few know about it. Does humanity consider this a reality or not?

Let me quote a perspective of the possible result of a nuclear war depicted to me by scientists of the USA, USSR, and the Federal Republic of Germany at an international roundtable conference of theologians and experts held in Moscow from February, 11-13, 1985. If only one percent of modern nuclear arsenals is used over a city in any part of the world, the following will happen:

Practically immediately after the explosion the surface of the earth will sink into complete darkness. Light will amount to less than one percent of the normal sunlight on a clear day, which is extremely dangerous for the photosynthesis of plants and will lead to the destruction of many species. The darkness

⁶JMP, 11 (1986) 46.

will last for months and probably much longer. Those who had survived would face a future of starvation.

As a result of this intense darkness the temperature on the earth's surface will sink to a very low level, in many areas 20 degrees below zero and even lower. The consequences are clear: many plants, animals and people will freeze to death. In coastal areas where the temperature of water is higher, the climate may not be as severe, but the difference between the temperature on land and on the sea will produce violent storms and hurricanes.

Still another terrible consequence is that the fires, in addition to their own destructive power, will generate huge clouds of toxic fumes which will cover the land with a poisonous smog for a long period of time.

In addition to darkness, cold, and toxic gases, the victims of a nuclear blast will be exposed to bombardment with radioactive particles not only immediately after the blast, but also for months on end.

As a result of this, the immune system of those who survive will be so seriously damaged that, in addition to famine, people will face worldwide epidemics. Even if life exists for some more time, damage to the reproductive organs will drastically reduce the possibility of giving birth to normal children.

When at last the darkness clears and sunlight returns to the earth, the sunlight will have an abnormal amount of dangerous ultra-violet radiation for several years due to the damage done to the ozone layer of the stratosphere. This will have two major effects: it will drastically increase the rate of skin cancer, and it will affect the food chain by interfering with the pollination of plants by insects and by destroying marine plants in the upper layer of the ocean.

Another important aspect of this changing notion is that all of the phenomena which we have described will be world-wide. Scientific studies indicate that even subtropical, normally warm areas will be subjected to severe frost, which even if lasting for only a very short period, will be sufficient to kill all vegetation. Though we once believed that there would be sanctuaries in the southern hemisphere to which a few people could flee, it is clear that these effects will also be felt throughout the southern hemisphere, even if after a short delay. The combined impact of these phenomena will be to destroy the life-support system of humanity throughout the world. But what is most shocking about all this is the realization of how little of our present nuclear stockpiles it would take to unleash this horrifying scenario. In fact, it would require less than one percent of these stockpiles, an amount that could be fired off by only one or two modern nuclear subma-

rines.⁷

This is what is in store for humanity. Can we remain indifferent to all this? I think not. Our Christian conscience will not allow it.

Let us listen to what an ancient peacemaker says in this respect:

So, think of yourselves . . . the Lord dwells in people who love peace, as he himself loves peace and is far from quarrels and corruption by spite. Return the spirit safe to him, as you have got it from him,⁸ and "Keep vigil about your life."⁹

What shall we do? How can we prevent this most terrible of earthly sins? We, who believe in God, should correspond to our world outlook and our hopes through all means.

Christ not only condemns mutual dissent and mutual hatred, but demands even more — that we should reconcile the dissent of others."¹⁰

It is necessary to act! We think that the existence and use of nuclear arms, as well as their testing, contradicts God's will because they endanger the sacred gifts of life which God has granted to us.

In his famous "Moral Rules," Saint Basil the Great asks: "Is it necessary to convince others of Christ's peace?"¹¹ The dilemma of Hamlet, "to be or not to be," in all its dramatic and inevitable character, faces all the states which exist on earth — hundreds of nations, nationalities, peoples, differentiated by language, race, material and spiritual culture created by their efforts, having different social and political systems and, at the same time, united by their belonging to the human race.

The most important recommendation for activity against the continuing madness of the nuclear arms race is "the recommendation for the universal growth of publicity concerning existing and new means of conducting war, expenses to which the arms race leads, and so on. Thus, it is known that at present, world military expenses exceed one billion dollars a day. And on the whole, five to six percent of the world production of goods and services are spent for military aims."¹² According to American scientist R. Sivard, "At present

⁷JMP, 8 (1986) 49-50.

⁸*Early Christian Fathers of the Church*, Pastor Hermas 3 (Brussels, 1978) p. 249.

⁹*Early Christian Fathers*, Didache p. 25.

¹⁰Saint John Chrysostom, *Works* 7 (St. Petersburg, 1901) p. 154.

¹¹Saint Basil the Great, *Works* 2 (Moscow, 1911) p. 35.

¹²Zagladin, *Question* p. 266.

sixty million people are active in state or private spheres of production which are connected with military activity."¹³

Besides publicity, preaching on the principle of the non-use of force for settling international conflicts is also necessary. It is imperative to remind all inhabitants of the earth of August 6th and 9th, 1945, when nuclear weapons were for the first time used against people. Humanity does not have a reserve of time, while solving ideological and social problems, to forget about the threat of nuclear war. In actual fact, the use of a nuclear potential can and should in no way serve as a means for defense and the spreading of a way of life.

All Christians of the east, west, north, and south must understand that (1) we have a common danger: a catastrophe may take place which has no limits and observes no rules; and (2) there cannot be a more important issue than peace on earth. Under modern conditions, national security is most organically combined with international security. Moreover, global security is the truth of the nuclear age.

A distinctive feature of our time is the emergence of a true universal struggle against the threat of nuclear war and the formation of more and more anti-nuclear movements, including religious ones. We believe that participation of Orthodox Christians in the peace-making movement in no way contradicts their destiny as children of God.

The Place of a Religious Person in Questions of War and Peace, Nuclear and Other Arms of Mass Destruction

In the Christian world, different points of view concerning the question of war and peace exist. Some people think that a sword is a weapon of protection and punishment, while to others this is the greatest sin. Still others believe that nuclear weapons, just as other weapons, can be neutralized; the rest express alarm, realizing that the human mind has achieved that critical moment when the real threat of self-destruction has surfaced. Who is right?

Saint Clement, bishop of Rome, writes in his Letter to the Corinthians that the "Great Creator and the Lord of everything who grants good to all and especially to us, who have restored to His grace through our Lord Jesus Christ, commanded to all creation, all people, the whole world, to live in harmony and peace."¹⁴ Words which were addressed to Christians at the end of the first to the beginning of the second century A. D. are at present as urgent as ever. Such words can also be found in the works of other authoritative Church Fathers.

¹³R. Sivard, *World Military and Social Expenditures* (New York, 1976) p. 9.

¹⁴*Early Christian Fathers*, "Saint Clement of Rome," 2, p. 56.

One thing is absolutely clear: we need reconciliation and the common language of love as the basis for peaceful existence. The Lord wishes peace for the whole world. Reconciliation of man with God and each other in Jesus Christ is the way which leads to it, "for He is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility . . . so making peace." (Eph 2.14-5).

A Christian cannot but oppose war and the use of mortal weapons. We hear the voice of God addressing all people of good will: "I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life, so that you and your descendants may live." (Dt 30.19).

Conclusion

Honorable participants of this conference:

We are approaching the end of our millennium. Thirteen years separate us from the moment when we will celebrate in prayer the two-thousandth anniversary of the coming to the world of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace. How shall we approach this day? In what condition shall we present our planet to the Creator, as an orchard in blossom, or as a lifeless, burned, weapon-devastated earth?

Will there be a place and enough reasonable force in our heart and feelings to realize the words of Saint Gregory the Theologian: "Beloved peace — a gift much praised by many, preserved by few, where have you been hiding from us for such a long time and when will you come back to us? I love you very much and more than anybody else and kiss you, considerably keep you when you are with us, and I call you with such tears and cries when you leave us."¹⁵

Can believers on earth not respond to such calls for peace as "The Message of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church 'On War and Peace in a Nuclear Age' " of February 7, 1986, or, for another example, "The Message to the Faithful of the World from the Moscow Clergy and Laity" of August 29, 1986? Here are some words with which I would like to conclude my report:

We cannot allow the idea that millions upon millions of people on earth cannot unite their efforts and tear the sword of nuclear death from the hands of a small group of political maniacs thirsting for human blood and suffering. Hence, our confidence in the possibility of preserving peace. For this struggle for life, for God's creation on earth, for the future of posterity, we stretch our hands for cooperation. Let us stop the nuclear

¹⁵Saint Gregory the Theologian, *Works* 1, p. 336.

arms race and with this end in view we urge you to demand complete and universal cessation of nuclear tests! Let us aim at delivering the earth from nuclear weapons by the end of the second millenium! We will not permit the use of outer space for military purposes. We will pray and act for reason to triumph in the world and that instead of military confrontation, cooperation and peace may set in!

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practice of Christianity in the life of the individual and the community through his preaching of the Word.

Drops from the Living Water and *Sparks from the Apostles* can serve to fill a need both for meditation but also as a guide for applied Christianity.

John E. Rexine
Colgate University

Voices in the Wilderness: An Anthology of Patristic Prayers. By Nikolaos S. Hatzinikolaou. Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1988, Pp. 288.

One of the essential activities of the Christian life is prayer. For Orthodox Christians, prayer is often viewed within the context of the liturgical or communal life of the Church. However, with the publication of such works as *The Way of a Pilgrim* and the *Philokalia*, as well as numerous prayer books containing the daily cycle of Orthodox prayers, the Orthodox Church's rich tradition of private and interior prayer has been made available to the pious believer. To this growing wealth of resources one must now add Fr. Nikolaos Hatzinikolaou's book *Voices in the Wilderness: An Anthology of Patristic Prayers* (288 pages. Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1988).

Voices in the Wilderness is a collection of seventy-four prayers, of varying length, taken from twenty-five Orthodox saints. The lives of these authors cover a period of some seventy-hundred years of the Orthodox Christian tradition. With care and thoughtfulness Fr. Nikolaos has selected and translated prayers from such well-known Saints as Saint John Chrysostom and Saint Basil the Great as well as prayers from two recent Orthodox Saints: Saint Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain and Saint Nektarios. The prayers are replete with biblical quotations which are referenced in the right margin and are accompanied by a complete index of biblical passages appearing in the back of the book.

Each group of prayers attributed to a given Saint is prefaced by a short biographical note about the Saint. On the preceding page is a photographic reproduction of the icon of the Saint below which appears a translation of the Saint's Dismissal Hymn (Apolytikion). The book appears in both hardcover and paperback. The cover of the paperback edition was designed by a friend and classmate of Fr.

Nikolaos, George Kordis, and contains a beautiful Byzantine iconographic depiction of a humble servant offering a prayer to God. There is a useful index which arranges the prayers according to their content, e.g. prayers to the Holy Trinity, evening prayers, etc. Finally, the entire work is graced by an insightful Preface written by Metropolitan Demetrios of Vresthena.

In his Introduction, Fr. Nikolaos states that this Anthology is not offered as a prayer book. This does not mean, however, that these prayers cannot be prayed. On the contrary, these prayers can easily become part of one's devotional life. *Voices in the Wilderness* is both a prayer book and a book on prayer. The unique value of this book is that it offers the reader access to the spiritual tradition of the Eastern Orthodox Church through the prayers of its Saints. The prayers can simply be read like other works of the Fathers. They give insight into how the Saints prayed and the content of their prayers.

Although the prayers contained in this book were written at different historical moments in the history of the Church, one is struck by their inner harmony. Several recurrent themes reflect the "same spirit of faith" (2 Cor 4:13) and serve to unite these diverse prayers: the majesty and mercy of God, humanity's desire to offer glory to God, human weakness and sinfulness, God as the source of all, the last judgement, and, above all, repentance. This is both a prayer book and a book in theology; a study of the human condition and a road map, through repentance, towards salvation. Whether these prayers are read or prayed they reveal the heart of the Christian life, that is, repentance. Through these prayers the Saints implore us to turn from our sinful nature, change our way of life and acquire "the mind of Christ" (1 Cor 2:16). These prayers offer us a glimpse into the "mind of the Saints" which is none other than the "mind of Christ."

A few final words about the "history" of the present book are in order. Fr. Nikolaos, a native of Thessalonike, Greece, travelled to Boston, MA in 1978 to pursue graduate studies in physics. Mr. Hatzinikolaou's lifelong love for the Church eventually led him to studies at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology during which time much of the book was compiled and translated. During his almost ten years in the Boston area, Mr. Hatzinikolaou devoted much of his energy to assisting families from Greece who had come to Boston in search of medical care for an ill child. He became frined and assistant of Mrs. Bess Pappas, the founder and president of the Hellenic Cardiac Fund for Children at Children's Hospital, Boston,

Massachusetts. It is out of his love for these children that Mr. Hatzinikolaou published this book for the benefit of the Hellenic Children's Cardiac Fund. Fittingly, the book's dedication reads, "To the little angels who suffer and to all those who serve and succour them." Fr. Nikolaos currently serves at the Monastery of the Ascension in Athens, Greece.

The present book brings together the collective wisdom of the Saints of the Orthodox Church concerning prayer. It speaks poignantly to the human condition —humanity's relation with oneself, each other, the world and ultimately with God. It is a book of timeless treasures and one which makes accessible the rich spiritual tradition of Orthodox Christianity. *Voices in the Wilderness* should be "heard" in the home of every Orthodox Christian.

James Skedros

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